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**Faith, Feeling and Gender in the Writing of  
Hartley, Wollstonecraft and Blake**

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# Contents

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>1</b>
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## **Introduction: ‘Radical Writers in Hartlean Culture’**

Introduction.....	3
Finding Hartley and Feminism.....	6
Inspiring Radicalism: Blake, Wollstonecraft and the Johnson Circle .....	10
Radical Writers .....	14
Radical Belief: Religious Dissent in the 1790s .....	23
Religious Feminism.....	29
Changing Feminism and Gender Concerns.....	32
Emotion and Feeling in Romanticism.....	36
Contributions and Definitions.....	41

## **Chapter One: ‘David Hartley and Joseph Priestley’s *Observations on Man*’**

Introduction.....	56
From Obscurity to Prominence: <i>Observations</i> ’ Beginnings 1735-1775.....	58
Popularizing Hartley through Priestley’s Fame .....	62
Priestley’s Additional Essays for <i>Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind</i> .....	66

‘The great demand there has been for it’ <i>Observations</i> in 1791.....	72
Volume One: Priestley’s Edition, with Additions.....	74
Volume Two: Reinstated in 1791.....	87
Volume Three: A Commentary to Volume Two.....	93
Marketing Hartley: Other Editions and Texts.....	97
Conclusion .....	99

## **Chapter Two: ‘Emotion and Feeling in Hartley’s *Observations on Man*’**

Introduction.....	101
Scholarly Interest in Hartley after Coleridge.....	106
Part I: Introduction to the Passions and Affections.....	114
The Causes of the Affections and Passions.....	120
Hartley’s Vibrations.....	124
History of the Body.....	128
Part II: Emotion Outside the Body.....	135
How to Control the Affections.....	142
Self-Annihilation and Perfection.....	147
Conclusion.....	151

## **Chapter Three: ‘Wollstonecraft’s Female Emotion and Hartley’s Perfectibility’**

Introduction.....	154
<i>The Cave of Fancy</i> : Criticizing Male Emotion and The Failure of the Romantic Bond.....	162

<i>Mary, A Fiction</i> Part I: Association and Female Solidarity .....	175
<i>Mary, A Fiction</i> Part II: Defending Female Inadequacy and Refusing Male Authority.....	177
<i>Original Stories: A Hartlean Mission and a Woman</i>	
Inspiring Women's Emotional Perfection .....	185
<i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: Women's Religion,</i>	
Their Perfectibility, and the Theory of Association.....	198
<i>Maria</i> Part I: A Novel Empowering Women's Bodily Emotion	
and Rejecting Masculine Control.....	207
<i>Maria</i> Part II: Jemima the Saviour Establishing Women's Love.....	214
Conclusion.....	223

#### **Chapter Four: 'Blake's Female Saviours and Hartley's Self-Annihilation'**

Introduction.....	226
Blake, Women and Feminism.....	229
<i>Milton: A Poem; Upholding Women, Refined Emotion, and Self-Annihilation</i> .....	236
<i>Milton: Heroic themes in Hartlean language</i> .....	239
A Flawed Hero: John Milton .....	247
Satan the Hero and His Female Potential.....	259
<i>Milton's</i> Female Saviours.....	270
Conclusion.....	276

<b>Conclusion</b> .....	267
<b>Notes</b> .....	281
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	304
<b>Appendix</b> .....	340

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### **Declaration**

**This thesis is my own work; no part of it has been published elsewhere or submitted  
for a degree at any other university**



## Abstract

This thesis examines David Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749) and elucidates how Hartley's mechanical approach to mind, his conception of emotion, and the religious status he awards the body were newly relevant after 1791. In this way it identifies a 'Hartlean culture' within the Romantic period and seeks to explore how such an intellectual climate influenced the radical writers William Blake (1757–1827) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797). Blake and Wollstonecraft were acquainted with the famous bookseller Joseph Johnson, who republished *Observations on Man* in various forms and versions between 1775 and 1801. They also had an association with Johnson's circle; the Hartlean concepts found throughout their work evidence Hartley's latent popularity within intellectual culture, as well as the writers' engagement with contemporary philosophical ideas.

I propose that the renewed curiosity in Hartley during the 1790s reveals a specific religious and revolutionary culture wherein non-conformist views about Christianity and new ideas about the body, emotion and women flourished. Such a cultural moment renders Hartley a particularly important figure for debate since he integrated progressive values about equality and faith alongside advancing understanding of anatomy and mind. Hartley identified how God and happiness could be found physically within each person. He did this by combining a complex theory of vibrations and theory of association, where the body and mind functioned mechanically through a person's feelings of pleasure and pain. These feelings manifested as physical vibrations and eventually led every person to desire goodness until finally, they can become 'Godlike' themselves.

Hartley's amalgamation of Christian and new theoretical concepts appealed to Blake and Wollstonecraft, and was much unlike the approach of Joseph Priestley who abridged

*Observations* in 1775 to promote a wholly ‘scientific’ text. In this way, we can see resonances between Hartley, Blake and Wollstonecraft, even if they existed in different cultural contexts.

In rethinking Blake and Wollstonecraft through Hartley, I offer new insights into their feminism. In particular I attend to how Hartlean culture enabled these writers to re-imagine gender and emotion: Wollstonecraft reinstates the female experience back into Hartlean concepts in order to promote women’s emotional potential and what she understands as the special power of the female-female bond. Blake responds to both Wollstonecraft and Hartley with his elevation of the feminine, one that envisions new potential for both sexes, emotionally and spiritually. In both cases, the writers share a fascination for the image of the female saviour, and they use terminology and concepts found in Hartley’s work to communicate their views. In being attentive to the shared vocabulary and ideas of these three writers’ works, this thesis highlights the importance of David Hartley and Hartlean culture for the field of Romantic Studies. It also illuminates *Observations on Man* as a vital contribution to the intellectual context of the 1790s.

## Introduction

### Radical Writers in Hartlean Culture

I envy the age in which that book will be relished and believed, for it has unfortunately appeared a century or two before the world is prepared for it. Its illustrious author has established an indissoluble union between physiology, metaphysics, and Christianity. He has so disposed them that they mutually afford not only support but beauty and splendour to each other. (Rush qtd Allen 1)

Benjamin Rush writing to Thomas Jefferson, 1811

## Introduction

This thesis focuses on the work of William Blake (1757–1827) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), radical writers, born two years apart and who both lived and worked in London. It is my argument that while these figures are not usually studied together, examining their work alongside each other allows us to capture a particular moment in history, when renewed interest in emotion,<sup>1</sup> dissenting religion,<sup>2</sup> and feminism stimulated a resurgence of curiosity regarding David Hartley's philosophy. Hartley's *Observations on Man*<sup>3</sup> had originally been published in 1749 but passed unnoticed. It re-emerged over twenty years later as *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* (1775), the abridged version of the text produced by Joseph Priestley and which offered a very different reading of the original author's ideas. Hartley had developed the associationist ideas from Locke, the concept of vibrations and aether from Newton, and connected these to the organs in order to explain how

the body, ideas and feelings were physically connected to the mind. This culminated in the concept of the mechanical mind, which was both spiritual and physical. Unlike in Priestley's shorter text, Hartley's ideas were amalgamated with a Christianized vision of spiritual perfection. This was the concept that each person would draw close to God and become morally perfect like him. While this process of improvement was owing to the workings of the body, the text stipulated that each person also had the power to expedite the development by feeling pleasure in benevolent, selfless acts. The eminence of Priestley and the popularity of his work led to its second edition in 1790. It also led to the republication of Hartley's original full-text in 1791, 1801 and 1810. As Isaac Kramnick states, after 1775 'Hartley, thanks to Priestley, was everywhere' (Allen 376). As I will argue in this thesis, the presence of Hartlean philosophy in the public imagination gave Blake and Wollstonecraft the impetus to forward and develop their feminist ideas about women and gender expression. I will also show that their work is more connected to the original version of the text than the 'Enlightenment' shorter text. In this light, we can assess how Blake and Wollstonecraft's own discussions regarding emotion and the body sympathize with Hartley's interest in Christianity and spirituality. Writing fifty years later, Blake and Wollstonecraft were producing work in a very different cultural context compared to Hartley in the 1740s; cultural understandings of 'emotion', 'religion' and 'science' naturally shifted with time, so in my textual analysis I aim to expand on what each writer means by his or her use of terms. Despite these changes, I suggest that what is most important is that these later writers resisted the rationalist and empiricist hegemony of their own age, and instead shared an intellectual affinity with Hartley. Their work is highly original because of its engagement with the diverse themes Hartley confronts, and this makes them intellectual outsiders (in a way that Hartley was not). The strong resonances between the three writers points to how Hartley could be re-

appropriated due to his on-going appeal and reinforces our understanding of Blake and Wollstonecraft as radical or peripheral figures.

Benjamin Rush's letter to Thomas Jefferson reveals that in 1811, Hartley's work was still seen as innovative and ingenious, especially because it unified seemingly disparate ideas such as faith, ethics, and the latest knowledge of anatomy and theory. Even if Hartley's theories were not wholly accepted, the intellectual and symbolic significance of *Observations* to Blake and Wollstonecraft's milieu renders Hartley's work aesthetically helpful and historically relevant. I analyse Hartley's text and assess its central concerns to ascertain new close readings of Blake and Wollstonecraft. This approach not only enables us to see how Hartlean culture impacted on and facilitated Blake and Wollstonecraft's ideas, but also allows us to gauge how Hartlean ideas were received and interpreted by them between 1787 and 1810.<sup>4</sup> Before turning to my main discussion regarding Hartlean culture's relevance to Blake and Wollstonecraft's religious and political ideas, I begin by discussing Hartley, Blake and Wollstonecraft's relationship to radicalism through Joseph Johnson's circle, and I highlight the contemporary expressions of radical writing and religious dissent characterising this group. From there I connect the development of feminism in the period to religious dissent in the Christian church and debates about gender. I build on this relationship through scholarship on emotion and Christianity by both eighteenth century and modern thinkers. Finally I conclude this introduction by outlining how I understand my research in relation to current work in the field and by providing some working definitions of the concepts most central to my argument.

## **Finding Hartley and Feminism**

The lack of critical attention to what I term ‘Hartlean culture’, that is, the climate sympathetic to Hartley’s work, has contributed to the misperception of Romantic era writers who can be interested in personalized religious experience and feeling, but also advances in anatomical research, the mechanical mind and radical politics. Specifically, an overlooking of Hartlean culture has compounded the impression that both Blake and Wollstonecraft are secular figures, whose aspirations for reform can exist apart from the philosophical context of the 1790s. I suggest that consideration of the various interests of Blake and Wollstonecraft can better illuminate their multiple ideas. Their references to association, the bodily organs, mechanical mind, and their scientized model of emotion and faith reflect Hartley’s ideas and their radicalism.

The Johnson Circle has been widely addressed by late-eighteenth century critics as a group of radical thinkers gathered around the house and bookshop of the dissenting publisher Joseph Johnson. Leslie Chard describes the location of this bookshop - 72 St Paul’s Churchyard - as ‘the site of some of the most important and interesting literary exchanges of the period’ (51), and, as we will see in chapter one, it was Johnson who published and popularized David Hartley from 1775–1801. Blake and Wollstonecraft had professional and personal relationships with Johnson. Regardless of whether they ever discussed literary or philosophical interests with the publisher or his colleagues and friends, through this association and their own peripheral subject positions in society, they were affiliated to the intellectual culture most sympathetic and conversant with Hartlean ideas.<sup>5</sup> Hartlean theory, then, is at the centre of discussion, just as much as the writers themselves, and I argue for a ‘two-way traffic’ between Hartlean concepts and the ideas of Blake and Wollstonecraft. Read

in relation to this view, the writers incorporate Hartlean ideas into their work, but they also adapt or modify them according to their own radicalism. In this way, they do not impose a 'rational' reading of Hartley, but instead favour his approach that combined faith in God and perfection, with references to the theories of association, vibrations and mechanical mind. This was much unlike Joseph Priestley who, as will be seen in the next chapter, abridged *Observations* to create the more secular rendition of the text that he considered suitable for an Enlightenment readership. Blake and Wollstonecraft's attention to both emotion and Christianity in their work resonates more with Hartley's integrated approach. These writers saw the natural relationship between faith and scientific theory and were uncommon in their natural preference to unify seemingly disparate concepts. Owing to the connection between Hartley, Blake and Wollstonecraft, and taking into account the different cultural moments, the first two chapters of this thesis are dedicated to a discussion of the intellectual context leading to *Observations*' publication and a detailed exploration of the text. This work helps to re-situate Hartley within Romantic Studies. The second two chapters look separately at Wollstonecraft and Blake to provide a more focused analysis, but in relation to the ideas raised in the first half of the thesis.

My interest in David Hartley was inspired through studying Anna Barbauld as a graduate student. Barbauld had appropriated Hartley's theory of association for her *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781), a series of beautiful and deeply emotional hymns, designed to instil love of God in the young reader. On reading Hartley myself, I found his work resonated with the benevolent image of God provided by Barbauld's collection, and *Observations* immediately spoke to my own interests in emotion, dissenting Christianity, and the body. I sought to understand how Hartley's scientific approach to emotion, faith, and morality could have been understood by those academic women, who, like Barbauld, encountered his ideas.<sup>6</sup>

This curiosity was stimulated further by my time studying eighteenth-century women poets at King's College London, where I was fortunate enough to take a course directed by KCL and the National Portrait Gallery. After studying an exhibition that arose as part of the partnership, *Brilliant Women Eighteenth-Century Bluestockings*, I became fascinated by the academic prowess of women such as Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Montagu and Hannah More, but especially how intellectual women in the eighteenth century had been so publically celebrated through art.<sup>7</sup> My initial concern was to develop a project dedicated to examining women's poetry,<sup>8</sup> much like some of the work which had influenced me at the time: Eleanor Ty (1998), Anne Janowitz (2004), Paula Backscheider (2005) and Stephen Behrendt (2009) had produced research focused entirely on female poets, and these scholars' dedication to promoting a feminist message through their female-centric approach appealed to my own aspirations to showcase women's intellectual achievements and participation in public debates. Similarly, Anne Mellor (2000), and edited collections by Vivien Jones (2000), Elizabeth Eger (2001) and Maria Crisafulli and Cecilia Pietropolo (2007), examined women's writing and gender in the eighteenth century apart from any discussion of their male counterparts. Despite the vitality and necessity of such work focused entirely on women's writing, I noticed the success of thematic studies that chose to study men and women together: Jacqueline Labbe (2000), Lucy Newlyn (2000), Jon Mee (2003), Daniel E. White (2006) and Susan Wolfson (2006) were particularly striking examples; and I became especially interested in Labbe's new research comparing Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, which illuminated a new conception of Romanticism away from its inaccurate conflation with the 'Wordsworthian' towards a more pertinent recognition of the 'Smithian'. Such research demonstrates the growing anachronism of work that homogenizes female



writers together on the basis of their sex (or excludes canonical and historically significant figures from discussion), particularly for a project that aims to represent the period.<sup>9</sup>

These were the considerations that led me to thinking about writer and educator Wollstonecraft and the artist-poet Blake in relation to one another within my larger study of Hartley. I wanted to further my understanding about the nature of Romantic feminism and gender, and I wondered how Hartley's bodily and scientific understanding of emotion and Christianity, as well as his belief in the mechanical workings of the mind, would have impacted on perception of women and feminism. I was dedicated to fore-fronting the voice of the writer who is still upheld as the 'Mother of Feminism', but so too did Blake capture my imagination: not only for his voracious interests in a radical Christianity and scientific concepts that connect him with Hartley, but also for his poetic presentations of women that resonate so strongly with Wollstonecraft's politics and life. I began to see how the unconventional ideas of these two writers, though different, could be seen as intellectually and politically sympathetic to each other, so that studying them together might enable important new insights into the period to emerge. As in the literary relationship between the canonical Smith and Wordsworth discussed by Labbe, so Wollstonecraft was the more popular and public female figure by whom the less widely-read male writer was influenced. While I am not examining the influence of Wollstonecraft on Blake, I do assume her vitality and importance to his thinking, and I consider their shared radical aspirations and non-conformism, a valuable mutual factor for fully appreciating the feminism of their work.

## Inspiring Radicalism: Blake, Wollstonecraft and the Johnson Circle

As two radicals on the periphery of the Johnson circle, Wollstonecraft and Blake were attached to a unique community of intellectuals and liberal friends whose ideals reflect Hartley's own liberal thought. The importance of the Johnson circle to radicalism and intellectual development in this period cannot be overstated. Johnson provided a vital point of contact in the 1790s for many intellectuals both inside and outside the capital. Alongside Blake and Wollstonecraft, the number around him included, amongst many others: Joseph Priestley, Gilbert Wakefield, William Godwin, John Horne Tooke and Thomas Paine.<sup>10</sup> Johnson's presence enabled the exchange of the most recent and radical ideas and offered the possibility for new relationships to be forged. The networks and friendships formed through him are reflective of the familial form of literary production within religious dissent, when it was usual for family members, friends, and institutions to collaborate and support each other (White 11).<sup>11</sup> Moreover, this was an explicitly feminist space: Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor remind us that by the Enlightenment, women (newly deemed to possess reason) were deeply respected and valued for their contributions to academic debates (xix),<sup>12</sup> and such an ethos of equality characterizes the group. The collection of writers were united in the pages of Johnson's journal, *The Analytical Review* (founded 1788), and these same liberal friends and contacts gathered at his house for the well-known weekly dinners, or at his bookshop below, which was itself a place of sociability and conversation.<sup>13</sup> The vibrancy of this location is described by Jon Mee as 'the hub of an information network linking dissenting opinion in the provinces with the capital,' which 'played a key role in the popularization of Enlightenment principles in the country as a whole' (Mee, *Companion to the Book* 131). Writing about the success of Johnson's business (prosperous from 1770-1809), and the culture it perpetuated,

Mee argues that this man's death in 1809 'effectively marked the end of the most vibrant phase of the liberal Enlightenment in Britain.'<sup>14</sup>

Johnson's publications reflected the cultural, political and scientific interests of Rational Dissent. He was himself emblematic of the liberal Dissenter, interested in scientific and industrial progress, but supporting the cause of religious toleration (Ackroyd 85); his interests were particularly united to those of *Observations on Man*'s most prominent supporter, Joseph Priestley, and he published over 130 of Priestley's titles (Chard 140). Johnson was also the chief publisher of the academics at the famous Warrington Academy, publishing some of the most well-known scientists and thinkers including George Fordyce, John Hunter, and Alex Monro. He was also at the forefront of medical advances: in 1791, the same year that he published *Observations on Man*, he launched the first medical periodical called *Medical Facts and Observations*. Johnson's priority was to give immediate coverage to the most current controversies and debates. As Chard argues, this was reflected in the speed at which he published, where his haste often resulted in textual errors, and with books being cheaply printed and bound, even in their second editions, or with imprints missing (Chard 144). Johnson's interest to give attention to the most important cultural events and discussions meant that he published work both adhering to, and opposing, his own views. For example, he produced work by Alexander Geddes, David Leveil and Job David that attacked Priestley's ideas, and although a 'staunch Unitarian' (Chard 140), he published works from evangelical Dissenters and Anglicans, the two most bitter opponents of Socinianism who attacked the sect.<sup>15</sup> As a result of his wide-ranging interests, Johnson produced between twenty and thirty books a year.<sup>16</sup> In total, of his 2700 imprints (in the forty-eight active years of his career), almost half of these were pamphlets rather than books, including, sermons, religious tracts and political leaflets. In terms of subject, his largest category was religion

(1067 titles).<sup>17</sup> This was followed by literature (350), medicine (300), politics (175), and science (125) (Chard 140). As Chard points out, ‘Virtually every giant of the second half of the eighteenth century in medicine, science, religion, philosophy, political thought, education, and poetry published at least one work with Johnson’ (149). However, Chard also remarks: ‘His list reflects both the intellectual temper of his time and his own biases, in particular his own mental growth towards greater liberality’ (140). Those associated with Johnson’s circle, like Blake and Wollstonecraft, were more directly exposed to the most significant debates, controversies and radical ideas of the country; the seriousness with which the government took the threat of Johnson’s publishing activity is represented in the man’s eventual arrest and imprisonment in 1799 for selling a pamphlet by Gilbert Wakefield. This arrest was made after his public support of Joseph Priestley in the Birmingham Riots (1791) and his questioning during the Treason Trials (1794), events which reveal to us the highly active and practical nature of this intellectual milieu.<sup>18</sup> Considering the special nature of this publisher, we must credit Johnson in encouraging Blake and Wollstonecraft’s academic curiosity, radicalism, and their contact with Hartlean philosophy. Regardless of the specific quantities of time they spent discussing philosophy or frequenting the group, Johnson’s impact on Romantic culture was vital in shaping the intellectual interests in the capital.

As well as having opportunity to correspond with famous liberals and intellectuals, both the artist poet and feminist writer benefited similarly from Johnson’s personal kindness and professional motivation. Johnson first encountered Wollstonecraft in 1787, when having been dismissed as a governess she went to his shop reporting her decision to earn money solely through writing. As a result, Johnson gave emotional and financial support to the writer (Chard 139), offering her accommodation and later finding her a house near Blackfriars Bridge (Franklin 56). Beginning her work as a critic for *The Analytical Review* in

1788, she is believed to have written more than 400 articles (Wardle, *Analytical Reviewer* 1003) specializing in educational works (Franklin 38) and later becoming a chief reviewer of numerous exciting and diverse publications (Franklin 60). Johnson published all of Wollstonecraft's work and was to become her 'lifelong patron' (Franklin 56); he also facilitated her work as a translator (prompting her to learn French and German), and she claimed that he had called her 'the first of a new genus', a woman who could support herself through her writing (Gaul 274). Writing to her sister Everina, Wollstonecraft was proud to affirm, 'Mr Johnson whose uncommon kindness, I believe, has saved me from despair, and vexations I shrink back from [...] assures me that if I exert my talents in writing I may support myself in a comfortable way' (Wollstonecraft qtd Kelly 55). Johnson was someone whom she regarded as a true friend. As she told him in a letter following a disagreement: 'You are my only friend - the only person I am intimate with. - I never had a father, or a brother - you have been both to me, ever since I knew you' (Wollstonecraft, *Letters* 178). We might conjecture that Johnson's influence was of major importance in her later depictions of compassionate and sophisticated male characters within her fiction, men whom she could never wholly condemn. This was a man in whom she confided both happiness and sorrow. Johnson's recollection of his friend gives us an insight into her character as well as their relationship:

During her stay in George Street she spent many of her afternoons & most of her evenings with me. She was incapable of disguise. Whatever the state of her mind it appeared when she entered, & the tone of conversation might easily be guessed; when harassed, which was very often the case, she was relieved by unbosoming herself & generally returned home calm, frequently in spirits. (Johnson qtd Gordon 137)

Like Wollstonecraft, Blake had been ‘introduced’ to the Johnson circle around 1787, through Fuseli (Essick 190), and the publisher was similarly invested to support his work. Johnson had been one of the chief employers of Blake’s graver from 1779-1786, and he went on to commission 90 plates between 1786 and 1801 (Bentley 108). In total, he supplied Blake with over one hundred commissions, allowing him to continue his creative endeavours during the most productive years of his career. Blake gained important connections with several of Johnson’s friends: Thomas Holcroft commissioned Blake’s plates for *The Wit’s Magazine* (1784), and the grandfather of Thomas Christie’s wife sponsored Blake’s special advertisement for Moore & Company Carpet and Hosiery Manufactory in 1797-98 (Bentley 111). Johnson himself agreed to publish Blake’s *The French Revolution*, which is considered by Bentley to be one of ‘Johnson’s most promising and generous actions towards Blake’, although this never happened (Chard 109). His desire to help Blake is clear in his letter to William Hayley in 1802: ‘Ever since I have had a connection with Mr Blake I have wished to serve him & on every occasion endeavoured to do so. I wish him to be paid for what he is now doing a fair & even liberal price’ (Johnson qtd Bentley 108). While scholars question the regularity of Blake’s visits to Johnson’s house and bookshop, he was for a time, a significant and supportive presence.

## **Radical Writers**

From the context I have so far narrated arises the question of how often Blake and Wollstonecraft met through their shared connection with Johnson. Nelson Hilton maintains

that ‘Though circumstantial, the evidence that Blake was personally acquainted with Wollstonecraft is compelling’ (70), and Carolyn Franklin agrees that it is ‘virtually certain’ (40).<sup>19</sup> Blake may have only infrequently attended Johnson’s weekly dinners,<sup>20</sup> but that these writers would have known of each other and each other’s work is without doubt. After her *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Blake would have been aware of the notorious Wollstonecraft by reputation, and he would also have known of her love affair with Henry Fuseli, of whom both were close friends;<sup>21</sup> it is in light of this relationship that critics have speculated that Oothoon from Blake’s *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793) (Franklin 107), and his poem ‘Mary’, are based on the writer and her feminist ideas (Bentley 111).<sup>22</sup> In Franklin’s view, Blake was ‘inspired’ by *Rights of Woman* to compose his *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (107), and in 1791, Johnson commissioned Blake to make ten designs for Wollstonecraft’s *Original Stories from Real Life*, her greatest commercial success. When Johnson asked Blake to make engravings of six of his own designs, it may have been the first time that the artist had produced original images for another author’s work (Franklin 40).

Despite their shared radicalism and subversive subject-positions in society, Blake and Wollstonecraft had starkly different early experiences. Wollstonecraft grew up in a violent home, where her aggressive father and submissive mother regarded her as secondary to an older brother. She lost her economic and middle-class status as a young woman when her father squandered the family’s inheritance. However, aside from teaching herself through reading, she used male-mentors to expand her learning until she was forced to assume the humble position of a lady’s companion in Bath. In 1782, through the help of a Mrs Burgh, Wollstonecraft opened a school with her sisters and beloved friend Fanny Blood. Although she found the experience of being a teacher difficult, the location of the school in Newington

Green deeply influenced her thought owing to its strong and vibrant dissenting community, and especially to her friendship with the Unitarian minister, Richard Price. The early tragedy of Wollstonecraft's life was the death of Blood in 1785. Too devastated to rescue her then failing school, Wollstonecraft became a governess in Ireland the following year, where she bonded with the eldest daughter of the family (and made use of their library to expand her learning). The position ended with her dismissal. Arguably, the most significant period of her life began on her return to London in 1787. It was here that her deepest attachments were formed and where she fell in love. At first she met Johnson and gained employment with her new-found desire to earn a living through writing. Yet soon after, she became infatuated with Fuseli whom she met in 1788 through Johnson. Treated badly by this married man she then fell in love with Gilbert Imlay, with whom she had a child. Her intense suffering at his treatment led her to attempt suicide (twice), although she found unexpected joy at being a mother to his child. She eventually formed a friendship with William Godwin in 1797. When she became pregnant, they married – a marriage that Godwin treated with good humour owing to his radical beliefs against matrimony. Mary regained some harmony in this relationship and she gave birth to her second daughter, Mary, before she died. Much of Wollstonecraft's own personal life-story informs her work and politics, particularly with regard to her intense emotions as a lover, mother and friend. In chapter three, we will see how the author explores her past experiences, and writes in light of Hartlean thinking.

Unlike Wollstonecraft, Blake grew up in a nurturing environment, and had a gentle father and affectionate mother who strongly encouraged his artistic endeavours and unusual creativity (Bentley 3-5). The children were raised in the Dissenting tradition that respected private study and personal experience and worship, but with a focus on the truth of the Bible. The area in London in which Blake grew up was also famous for its artists and people of



fashion. Early in Blake's childhood, he reported seeing visions and also showed a passion and talent for art. He was sent to Drawing School by his father, a generous act for a family that would have been challenged by the great expense of such an education. By 1772 Blake was made an apprentice to the engraver, James Basire. When he finished seven years later he had become a professional and gained a place to study at the Royal Academy schools. Heartbroken by a previous lover, Blake met his wife Catherine in 1781, with whom he enjoyed a close relationship and taught to read and write. He was deeply affected by the death of his brother Robert in 1787, an event that impacted on his work throughout his life much in the same way that death of Fanny Blood had impacted on Wollstonecraft. His important connections with many of Joseph Johnson's friends included Thomas Holcroft, Horne Tooke, William Godwin, and Tom Paine. Blake became less well-known after 1809 and more occupied with his visions while working on *Jerusalem*, leading to Catherine Blake's now famous comment to the artist Seymour Kirkup, 'I have very little of Mr. Blake's company; he is always in Paradise' (Bentley 364). The two had no children, but worked together on his projects. One of the most intense periods for Blake (and dramatized in the poem *Milton*) was his stay in Felpham from 1800-1803 under the patronage of his friend William Hayley. Having become depressed in London where Blake felt 'I find on all hands great objections to my doing anything but the meer drudgery of business' (Blake qtd Bentley 207), he considered himself rescued by the invitation to live in Felpham and work for Hayley. While initially Blake was hopeful for the opportunity for spiritual, emotional and creative renewal, by 1803 he was strained, disillusioned and troubled by his relationship with Hayley whom he saw as jealous, controlling and both personally and professionally damaging. Hayley temporarily redeemed himself when he supported Blake during his trial (caused when the poet was prosecuted for his public altercation with a soldier in Felpham), but his mistrust of

the man could not be abated, and he finally returned to London writing about Hayley in his notebook, 'when he could not act upon my wife / [He] hired a Villain to bereave my Life' (Blake qtd Bentley 265). While this period of time ended in anguish, the artist-poet continued in his creativity until the end of his life, where he was much admired by young artists who visited him regularly. He was reported to have died expressing great happiness at the presence of his visions of Heaven.<sup>23</sup> Like Wollstonecraft's work, Blake's is absorbed by his personal experiences, making the texts themselves monuments to past feelings. This demonstrates the seriousness with which both writers treated the value of experience in forming and communicating their philosophy.

Despite the personal nature of their work, Blake and Wollstonecraft's radical politics are often examined outside of the Christian heritage that was so important to them.<sup>24</sup> The writers' use of Christian references and symbols is an important means they employ to promote their aspirations for progression and reform.<sup>25</sup> Robert Ryan alludes to the specifically revolutionary power that religion was seen to hold for Blake, contending that the poet 'was primarily concerned with an historically situated community of believers as they faced the moral and political challenges of their time; everything he wrote was intended to change the national religious consciousness so that better moral and political effects would follow' (Ryan 9). Similarly, regarding Wollstonecraft's religious faith, Barbara Taylor argues:

if we bypass it in favour of a more familiar, secularized version of Wollstonecraft's project, we lose both the historical woman and her principal mission: to liberate women from masculine tyranny not in order that they should become free-floating agents, stripped of all

obligatory ties, but in order to bind them more closely to their God. ('Religious Foundations' 116)

While I am not concerned here with arguing for or against the proposition that Blake or Wollstonecraft believed in the Christian God, the Bible or Jesus, I am attentive to their work's treatment of religious imagery, and what effect they wanted this to have. This is very much part of the Hartlean culture identified, especially as it relates to progression, reform and discussion of gender. In the case of these writers, images of the saviour, redemption, and benevolent theism reoccur in particular. Furthermore, the ideas of God, life-after-death, and the sacredness of the body/soul are assumed, where each is thought vital for the writers in relation to human rights. Chapters two, three and four recognize how Christian themes endorse the utopian ideas of Hartley, Wollstonecraft and Blake, seeing relevance in their shared religious radicalism that tells us about the spirit of the age.<sup>26</sup>

As gestured at above, the quite personal versions of Christianity that Blake and Wollstonecraft crafted reflect their political commitments and the influence of the alternative community of dissenters, liberals, and non-believers in the Johnson circle. Like this group, both writers embraced new ideas and were creative with their inherited Christianity, informing it with diverse theological, theoretical, and political concepts. Ryan draws attention to the important Christian basis of Blake's religious identity however unorthodox his opinions: 'I take seriously [...] Blake's own claim to the title of Christian, as expressed for example in a letter to his friend Butts in 1802: "I still & shall to Eternity Embrace Christianity and Adore him who is the Express image of God."' (Blake qtd Ryan 46). While it is difficult to confine Blake to a particular version of Christianity, or even to a particular religious outlook, he promoted the love of Christ, and as Knight and Mason argue, Blake's

endless paraphrasing of Scripture locates Jesus at the centre of his work (43). This is an important point when we view the historical Jesus as symbolically subversive in Blake's imagination.<sup>27</sup> Blake's beliefs drew mainly from dissenting influences, especially the Unitarians,<sup>28</sup> Swedenborgians, and Moravians (Knight and Mason 42). The attraction of dissent surrounded its experiential aspects, and the Moravian emphasis on love, the Anabaptist elevation of Christ, and the Swedenborgian investment in mysticism (Knight and Mason 42).<sup>29</sup> Scholars have struggled to identify Blake's early religious training, since his parents seemed to be both committed to Anglicanism, but also rooted in religious Dissent (Schuchard and Davies 42). While he was baptized at the Anglican Church at St James, Piccadilly, recent scholarship has been interested to draw attention to the fact that Blake's own mother was Moravian and to highlight the influence this would have had on Blake's outlook.<sup>30</sup> Marsha Keith Schuchard offers a thorough analysis of the sect and believes that 'Catherine Blake [...] will help us understand her influence on the artistic and spiritual development of her most unusual son, William' (Schuchard 13-14).<sup>31</sup> She details how the group's ethos indirectly fostered Blake's own 'radical notions of sexualized spirituality (or spiritualized sexuality)' (8). The sexual aspect of Blake's religion was noticed famously by W. B. Yeats, who claimed that both he and Blake made a connection between the energy of sexual passion and the capacity for spiritual vision (Schuchard 7). Yeats was not aware of the Moravian background that nurtured Blake's eroticisation of spirituality, but saw this through Swedenborg's theosophy of conjugal love that drew from Kabbalistic sources (Schuchard 337). Blake wittily claimed his own views favouring polyamory to be rooted in the Bible (Schuchard 2). Typical beliefs of the Moravians to which his mother would have been sympathetic were: the recognition of Jesus as the humanized God-man (and belief in God's body and human experience); the ability for people to have visions of this God-Man; and also

the maternal Holy Spirit, angels and spirits (127-128). In terms of devotion, this included an intuitive, experiential reality of Jesus that each person could feel; the heart was seen as the centre of emotional and intellectual knowledge and capable of instinctive feeling (20-21). Schuman summarizes: 'For Zinzendorf and his devotees, the 'Religion of the Heart' brought great imaginative joy and a full-bodied sense of religious ecstasy' (22). At the age of four, Blake claimed to have seen God at the window, and aged ten, a tree filled with angels (Schuchard 128), although both moments are perhaps more revelatory of his sense of internal vision than a confession of 'real' sightings. Nonetheless his admiration for the theosophical work of Madam Guyon (the French mystic whom Zinzendorf also enjoyed) attests to his interest in mysticism and would have been fostered by Blake's attendance at the Fetter Lane gatherings where it was discussed (Schuchard 140). This is an important Hartlean connection when we consider that the controversial 'Quietist' movement (of which Guyon was an important figure) would have resonated with Hartley's interest in self-annihilation, pure love of God, and important practises such as wordless prayer and voluntary silence (Allen 334-335). Considering the artist-poet's original approach the Bible, Christopher Rowland is able to cite him as 'a brilliant biblical interpreter – eccentric, perhaps, but one of Britain's most insightful exegetes. Engagement with his work reshapes the way in which one reads the Bible' (1).<sup>32</sup> Rowland and Roberts argue for his 'open-ended way of relating to the Bible and to one-another through forgiveness and creativity' that they call the 'Imagination [...] a kind of thinking that is qualitatively different from what might be termed "legalistic thinking"' (79).

Mary Wollstonecraft's beliefs were as equally personalized as Blake's. She was brought up in the Church of England and was a church-goer for the first twenty-eight years of her life.<sup>33</sup> While she never became a Unitarian, its crucial influence on her feminism (and on her intellectual development in general) is long-recognized (Taylor *Cambridge Companion*

108). As already mentioned, this impact was particularly owing to her admiration of Richard Price, minister of the Unitarian chapel at Newington Green,<sup>34</sup> and whose sermons she both read and attended (Taylor *Feminist Imagination* 103). Price's theology had special appeal for Wollstonecraft because it focused on the individual's exercise of reason to determine the moral law and practise virtue.<sup>35</sup> Like other Rational Dissenters, Price was anti-Calvinist, a position Wollstonecraft shared. As she wrote in 1794, 'We must get entirely clear of all the notions [...] of original sin [...] [to] leave room for the expansion of the human heart' (Wollstonecraft qtd Taylor *Feminist Imagination* 103). Her first published work, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, was steeped in Orthodox attitudes, and warned against rationalist speculation, Deism, and impressed that clear-cut religious principles would prevent women falling prey to the 'wilds of romance'. However, by the time she published her last work, *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, the writer supported free-thinkers who 'deny the divinity of Christ and, [...] question the necessity or utility of the christian system' (Wollstonecraft qtd Taylor, *Feminist Imagination* 95). Writing about this shift in her thought, Barbara Taylor contends that 'The abandonment of Christian orthodoxy, however, only served to underline her commitment to what had become a highly personal faith' (95). As Godwin famously said of his wife, her religion was 'almost entirely of her own making' so that 'When she walked amidst the wonders of nature, she was accustomed to converse with her God' (Godwin qtd Franklin 14). Godwin depicts a creative and independent woman who was more influenced by natural than revealed religion (Taylor, *Feminist Imagination* 95). This all-encompassing and practical-based faith is something we will see reflected in her works.

Hartley too had an individual approach to his own faith, which unsettled conservative readers. I will go into more detail about Hartley and the religious context of *Observations on*

*Man* in chapters one and two, but we should note here the philosopher's appeal to religious dissent. This attraction was evoked through his own unusual and non-Christian model of God, which was based on his philosophy of universal happiness for all, rather than being confined to the scriptures or tradition. Hartley's view of God is mapped on to pre-existing philosophical tenets of salvation for all and the necessary benevolence, goodness and happiness of God. While his *Observations* claim the absolute truth of the Bible, and discusses this in extensive terms, Hartley is still dedicated to viewing the world, and humans, as subjected to mechanical, comprehensible laws. This was a man who had already positioned himself outside the Church of England when he could not agree to the Thirty-Nine Articles to become a minister, taking up a medical career in its place.

### **Radical Belief: Religious Dissent in the 1790s**

In the late-eighteenth century, personal ideas and specificity of belief were vital in expressing how each person negotiated their political and moral opinions. Research by Daniel White, Martin Priestman and Colin Jaegar depicts a period when the public discussion of Christian ideas was widespread.<sup>36</sup> According to White, 'If anything, the late-eighteenth century witnessed a flourishing not of sectarianism but of denominationalism, with its characteristic of inclusive membership' (6). This remark identifies a time when disparate Christian ideas could be tolerated as some came to examine and re-assert their own more individual Christian beliefs. We should remember that Religious Dissent completely reshaped Britain and helped form the culture of Romanticism in England;<sup>37</sup> while the 1790s witnessed the gradual decline of the dissenting public sphere, its symbolic power remained, as did its association with radicalism and activism.<sup>38</sup> Significantly, the liberatory function that

religion was perceived to play encouraged radicals to use it and promote their ideas for reform<sup>39</sup> (Ryan 10). This is an important point when we consider why those like Blake and Wollstonecraft leaned towards religious dissent and not Anglicanism, preferring the opportunity to combine their controversial aspirations with a personal religious faith.

Unitarianism was the religious group most recognized for its radicalism (Ankarsjö 16), and was also the leading group of Rational Dissent between 1780 and 1830. This movement is particularly important for Blake and Wollstonecraft, since, although not Unitarians themselves, both writers had close contact with adherents to the religion and its philosophy (Priestman 8).<sup>40</sup> This was ‘a fashionable religion among literary people’ (Ankarsjö 16) whose number included Joseph Johnson, Joseph Priestley, Richard Price, Anna Barbauld, the Aikins, Mary Hays,<sup>41</sup> Amelia Alderson, William Hazlitt and S. T. Coleridge. As we will see, Unitarianism also has strong associations with feminism, but perhaps most significantly for this discussion is to recall that Hartley’s philosophy had an important role in forming the religion; for this reason it is Ruth Watt’s view that acceptance of Hartlean philosophy often naturally led to conversion to Unitarianism (Watts *Gender, Power* 41).

The strong connection between Unitarianism and Hartlean philosophy allows us to see how *Observations* inspired, but was also re-appropriated by, the liberal values of religious dissent. The ‘great explicator of modern Unitarianism’ was Priestley who based his philosophy upon Locke and Hartley so that their study became fundamental to the curriculum of the Unitarian academies (Gleadle 10); these were the alternative universities for men excluded by Oxford and Cambridge for being outside the Established Church. Having been a tutor at Warrington (1761-1767) and Hackney (1791-1794), Priestley made Hartley ‘the cornerstone of Unitarian educational thought’ in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries (Watts *Gender, Power* 35). Hartley is named ‘Locke’s successor’ by Kathryn



Gleadle, and it was the former's materialistic concept of knowledge, together with Hartley's development of this work, which allowed the two to become what she calls 'the intellectual linchpins of Unitarian thought' (10). Watts describes his appeal:

Priestley, ever eager to find a few basic wide-reaching laws which would hopefully transform what he saw as ignorance, superstition, confusion and unfounded authority into a clear logically related system, was excited by Hartley's scientific and sensationalist explanation of human thought and behaviour. (*Revolution and Reaction* 312)<sup>42</sup>

Priestley was attracted by Hartley's use of psychology, history and science that promised to lead humanity to virtue and knowledge of divine providence.<sup>43</sup> This intellectual approach was especially important since Unitarianism was surrounded by controversy, being considered both dangerous and revolutionary (Watts, *Revolution and Reactionaries* 316-317, 323); Priestley wanted dissenting ministers to understand and be able to defend their own beliefs. This academic approach to faith was one that empowered the individual to take charge of his or her own salvation and invited dissenters to inform their Christianity with scientific theory and philosophy. As such, its presence inspired people to think more broadly about the Bible and their own Christian beliefs, even if they did not profess to be Unitarians themselves. This is a faith that both tolerated and encouraged the independent thinking of men and women outside of any particular body or authority; as such, it is key to the 'Hartlean culture' identified in this discussion.

Believing that each person should be allowed to foster his or her own understanding to discover the truth about God, Unitarianism was a science linked to the ethos of freedom (Gleadle 12). The culture of this religion developed into the nineteenth century where the

influence of German Biblical Scholarship led many Unitarians to seek religious authority ‘not in an infallible Bible but in a concept of God that resided within each person’ (Gleadle 12). Unitarianism did not have a set of formal creeds, rites, ceremonies or dogmas; rather they were united in their anti-trinitarianism, believing that Christ was purely human, even if sent by God to convince people of his teachings, his miracles, and his resurrection (Priestman 8). As such, the traditional doctrines of atonement, original sin, vicarious punishment, or eternal Hell were rejected (Paulin xiv), and the individual’s own ability to progress into deeper faith or perfection was paramount. As we will see in chapter two, this individualistic concept of self-improvement was also central to Hartlean philosophy, and Hartley similarly avoided Calvinist doctrines, instead favouring the view that all human beings are capable of reaching perfection after death. Tom Paulin points to the resonance with *Observations on Man*’s analysis of the body and mind of Man, when he says: ‘Unitarianism does not begin with an idea of God, or a doctrine about Christ or a dogma concerning the Bible or a theory of the Church, but with the study of human nature’ (Paulin xiv).

The revolutionary fervour of dissenting religion was equally apparent in the growing interest in Prophecy and Millenarianism. The energy and symbolic power of these belief systems contributes to the radical nature of this Hartlean Culture that was committed to reform as part of a Christian context. Iain McCalman depicts the period 1786-1836 as one when the radical dissenting culture led to a growth of interest in prophets, both male and female, as they looked towards impending spiritual revolution. Revealing the fascination for this prophet-saviour role (that re-appears in the work of Blake and Wollstonecraft in their depiction of female saviours) was the rise of self-styled prophets and the new printed genre of prophecies (323). Published prophecies were often anthologized texts that dissolved the distinction between scholarly and popular writing: in *Wonderful Prophecies*, parts of

Priestley's 'Fast Sermon' made up the anthology, as well as extracts from Richard Brothers'<sup>44</sup> *Revealed Knowledge*, and several prophetic anecdotes of Lord George Gordon,<sup>45</sup> Christopher Love, Swedenborg, Nostradamus, a contemporary astrologer, and a physician of the Royal College. The editor of this text argued in 1795 that children, idiots and the unlearned could be conduits of God's spirits, but would offer coded messages that required 'the natural or inherent free agency of the human mind' for their interpretation (McCalman 326). Priestley, who was strongly associated with his millenarian beliefs, was regarded as a prophet,<sup>46</sup> and the popularity of the prophetess, Joanna Southcott, reminds us of the growing acceptance of women in religious terms. This was a particular climate where a person could claim a religious authority and share his or her vision. Important here is how such prophetic writing captured the imaginations of readers, who saw religious relevance in everyday events; the religio-political scholarship was powerful enough to carry restorationist ideas to future generations of radicals, rationalists and romantics during the agitations of the 1820s and 1830s (333), and both the government and loyalists took seriously the issue of Jewish Restorationism and self-proclaimed prophets.

Another faith revolutionizing the religious landscape, and attracting more than half a million people in Britain between 1740 and 1840, was Methodism. Although not officially considered part of dissent (it located itself within the Established Church), the appeal of this movement rested on its controversial practises that challenged Anglican doctrine and tradition in order to appeal to those who were dissatisfied or marginalized by the Church. This faith reflects the ethos of Hartlean culture depicted, in its respect for emotion, individual experience, and reform. John Wesley had wanted to escape the superficiality of some Anglican rituals, and rescue those who could not access its approach to spirituality; accordingly, he insisted that preachers must speak and write in the plain language of the

common people, and ecclesiastical authority was strongly avoided. Methodism promoted the idea of justification by faith, and as a result, gave power back to believers by valuing their own experiences with God for this purpose. As Wesley contended that each person had free will and could work out their own salvation (Rivers 247), Methodist services were devotional whereby each person could communicate with God emotionally themselves. As this strongly-felt faith in Christ and a desire to save one's own soul was vital, it was Wesley's concern that the movement should appeal to an unlearned audience. This valuation of each human being had wide social ramifications, with a particular concern for the poor. As industrialisation advanced from 1800, Wesleyan Methodists was powerful in poorer communities where it became increasingly popular (N. Hilton 138). Most famously, Methodism had a strong role in the abolition of slavery and human rights came to be part of Wesley's own discourse. Related to this, Methodism's major strengths and reason for its 'mass recruitment' (Knight and Mason 33) was its acceptance of women, where in the eighteenth century, over half of Britain's Methodists were female (Mason, *Religious Intellectuals* 76). This reflects the inclusive nature of the denomination, one that was committed to its principal of equality.

This discussion of non-conformist religion reflects the strong but diverse Christian culture that lent itself to revolutionary reform and progression in society. The role of emotion in religion was a particularly divisive issue, where its ability to offer knowledge or truth was under debate, leading extremely different views to exist on the matter; however, as we have seen, individuality, tolerance, and equality became ever-more respected in the Church, igniting debates about human rights, each person's natural capacity for self-improvement, and interest regarding the subsequent place and potential of women. The late-eighteenth century was a period where the issues of feminism, emotion, and personalized Christian

belief, were each undergoing re-evaluation, and new ways of perceiving any of these necessarily impacted on each other.

## **Religious Feminism**

The notion of women taking charge in religious matters was a familiar one. The Methodist acceptance of women earlier in the eighteenth century had already embraced their value spiritually. Famously, John Wesley had actually encouraged women to preach,<sup>47</sup> and Mark Knight and Emma Mason refer to ‘Methodism’s feminist agenda’ that also benefited women who were not Methodists, such as Hannah More, owing to the changing activities they were seen to undertake (76). Women’s roles as class-leaders, Sunday School teachers, and preachers represented both their authority and their centrality to religious and moral education, sustained in the Victorian period and beyond (Knight and Mason 33). Mason explains the paradigmatic shift regarding views of women: ‘Methodism thus fostered a new image of woman that emphasized her role as a guardian of moral standards and piety, rather than as a licentious Eve’ (*Religious Intellectuals* 76). This is an important point that must not be underestimated. Women were newly given the opportunities to express themselves, aspire to be equal to men, enjoy female-solidarity, and even economic power (Knight and Mason 33). As this was a faith that placed emphasis on personal conviction and the Atonement, both men and women’s spiritual experiences necessarily had to be both valued and validated.

The links between Christianity and feminism had long been a theme in Protestant England, where the eighteenth-century atmosphere of religious enquiry and revolution reinforced the burgeoning feminism (Taylor, *Feminist Imagination* 99). The Arminian spirit established amongst the Church of England Latitudinarians had meant that by the end of the

seventeenth century, this ‘powerful minority movement’ placed greater emphasis on Christianity as a moral religion based on reason - a feeling that grew rapidly in the nation (M. Hilton 50). By the mid-eighteenth century, academic women like Elizabeth Carter began writing in defence of a rational piety based upon the religion of reason (Hilton 51). So too did Catherine Talbot develop the notion of latitudinarianism ‘to create a specific *feminine* model of rational piety’ (M. Hilton 51). By the 1780s, the concept of rational piety promoted intellectual exchange on equal terms between men and women in polite society, encouraging enlightenment thinkers to accept that there was little difference between the potential of the sexes (M. Hilton 63). Contributing to this impression of a progressive way of thinking about women in the Church, Susan Staves argues against feminist scholarship that suggests ‘patriarchal religion’ had repressed women in the Church of England, to claim instead that ‘this particular form of patriarchal religion fostered and celebrated women’s expression of their intellectual and spiritual capacities’ (85). Her argument is based on the relationships between Church of England clergy and women writers, where these men saw the potential of intellectual women to assist in pastoral care and to ‘enhance the reputation of the Anglican Church’ by creating a model of female piety (Staves 94). Yet these women generally avoided writing about theological controversies (91) and outside the Established Church, dissenters held a more radical vision of women’s role. Taylor argues that, ‘Female political engagement was not suddenly born out of a mid-Victorian reaction to the imposition of “separate spheres”’ (*Feminist Imagination* 150), but rather, ‘Radical female political activity (out of which a feminist conviction could often, but did not necessarily, arise) had begun to coalesce in the late 1770s, as a consequence of the growing radicalism of rational dissent’ (150). More specifically, Taylor sees women’s sense of ethical worth and their desire to identify with the

divine as based on dissenting religion's egalitarian implications, which are not so discernible in the Established Church (*Feminist Imagination* 102).<sup>48</sup>

This progressive understanding of women in non-conformist Christianity was particularly evident in Unitarianism, where the feminist ideology of dissent was explored more fully (Gleadle, *Gender, Power* 149) and women took advantage of this ethos of gender equality to express themselves and their talents (Vickery 127). This not only gave women a more prominent role within the dissenting communities, but by the early-nineteenth century an 'ambitious feminist agenda' had evolved, 'in which the principle of women's rights became central to wide social and political programs' (Gleadle 149-150). The Hartlean-based, revolutionary, and noticeably feminist inflection of Unitarianism is commented on by Gleadle, who suggests that while 'the culture of the radical dissenters may have been constructed on the building blocks of Locke and Hartley [...] it was often the women in the family (fuelled by the powerful ethos of female self-education which was typical of these circles) who studied their texts most assiduously' (Gleadle, *British Women* 128).

As I have indicated, this was a culture that promoted the spiritual equality of women and emphasized the democracy of God's grace, empowering women to assert themselves within Puritan sects, but also inspiring godly feminists within the Church of England.<sup>49</sup> Such a moment of growing religious feminism would support the imaginations of writers interested in women's potential, whilst also allowing women to be reconsidered in terms of their spiritual worth more generally.

## Changing Feminism and Gender Concerns

Alongside these new spiritual conceptions of women that had the potential to promote their status, from the Enlightenment period until the early-nineteenth century, advances in medical science placed the issue of sex-difference to the forefront of intellectual debate; physiological and psychological differences were emphasized, while at the same time, sociologists were aware of the increasing social and intellectual convergence between men and women (O'Brien 1). Regardless of the question of whether 'woman' was a natural or social category therefore, the period 1770–1815 was one when attitudes towards them underwent considerable change, even if feminist feeling did not progress in linear terms.

In the 1770s, public attitudes towards women were especially positive and reflective of a moment of British patriotism: in particular, while the term 'bluestocking'<sup>50</sup> was initially applied to both intellectual women and men, at this time it came to be specifically used to denote national pride in female achievements (Eger and Peltz 17).<sup>51</sup> Relevant to our discussion of Joseph Johnson therefore, we should note that in 1777, this publisher had commissioned and sold a highly popular print of the leading academic and artistic women of the period.<sup>52</sup> The existence of the pocket book in which it appeared not only reflects his engagement with and support of this feminist moment, but it also reveals the profitability of such material in the marketplace. Such popularity meant that two years later, Richard Samuel's portrait *The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain* (1778) was exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition, an artistic piece that is testament to the optimistic attitudes regarding female excellence (Eger and Peltz 60). Women's output included poetry, education tracts, history, philosophy, political pamphlets, classical translation, drama, novels and criticism; also portraits and decorative work to ambitious history paintings (Eger and Peltz 17). Recent



scholarship over the last twenty-five years has now redressed the oversight of women in the Romantic period, so as Labbe says, the incorrect assumption that they ‘wrote unambitiously, mostly anonymously, and concentrated on “feminine” concerns like the family and the home’ (*The History of British Women’s Writing* 1) has been discredited and refused. Instead, we have come to be aware of the proliferation and great success of women writers. The strong public presence of academic women was inspiration enough for Mary Wollstonecraft to write passionately in 1790 to the historian Catherine Macaulay: ‘Madam [...] shall I tell you the truth? You are the only female writer who I consider in opinion with respecting the rank our sex ought to attain in the world. I respect Mrs Macaulay Graham because she contends for laurels not flowers’ (Wollstonecraft qtd Eger and Peltz 106). This letter reminds us of the symbolic power of academic women in the public eye, especially for other intellectual women; even in 1795, Maria Edgeworth still noted: ‘Women of literature are much more numerous of late than they were a few years ago. They make a class in society, they fill the public eye, and have acquired a degree of consequence and appropriate character’ (Edgeworth qtd Eger and Peltz 128).

However, by the early-nineteenth century, such affirmative feeling about aspirational women was reversed, and the term ‘bluestocking’ came to be a term of abuse and derogation.<sup>53</sup> Richard Polwhele’s now famous reference to ‘Unsex’d Females’ in 1798 (which denoted intellectual women)<sup>54</sup> chiefly criticized behaviour in women that did not correspond to the expected gender performance.<sup>55</sup> By 1815, reaction against female intellect was ‘widespread and becoming more entrenched’, even amongst the leading Romantic writers, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron and Hazlitt (Eger and Peltz 130).<sup>56</sup>

Eger and Peltz cite the change in attitudes as stemming from the French Revolution, after which ‘the combined social and intellectual prominence of so many intelligent women

was greeted with suspicion and disgust by many men (129). While this is true, Susan Wolfson reminds us that although the revolution exacerbated debates, ‘a crisis (or at least a critical condition) in gender understandings was brewing before this historical rupture was clear enough [...] the revolution did not initiate gender questions (3).’<sup>57</sup> This is an important point when we consider the period as one fascinated by the meaning of sex and gender, and when ambivalent feeling regarding what was considered ‘right’ or appropriate behaviour was not only directed at women, but also men. Claudia Johnson contends that during the 1790s both sexes were under scrutiny for their conduct, especially regarding the expression of their feelings and emotions; as a result, accusations of transgressing the sex or gender boundaries could be newly levied against enemies and was taken seriously (11). Although any notion of gender’s fictive nature was uncommon in the eighteenth century (where sex and gender were considered to be intrinsically linked), as Labbe has pointed out, the various conduct books explaining how to acquire the characteristics of womanhood, gesture to its performative nature, and it is possible that a discerning reader could have perceived this implication (*Culture of Gender* 4). In Labbe’s view, for example, this helps explain Charlotte Smith’s ‘knowing acceptance of gender roles and her self-conscious use of femininity’ (*Culture of Gender* 17). She adds: ‘The mores of gender in the eighteenth century suggest less consensus than a desire that there be consensus’ (4). This is a useful consideration when we reflect on how Blake and Wollstonecraft might have contemplated sex and gender in equally sophisticated ways. The potential fluidity of gender meant that definitions of what could be considered ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ behaviour and feeling shifted. Describing the societal impact of these changes in thought, Claudia Johnson makes the point that ‘sentimentality’ did not spell out the ‘feminization’ of culture, as is so often imagined in literary studies. Rather, the effect was the opposite: the phenomenon of sensibility ‘entailed instead the

“masculization” of formerly feminine gender traits, and [...] the affective practises associated with it are valued *not* because they are understood as feminine, but precisely and only so far as they have been recoded as masculine’ (*Equivocal Beings* 14).

That the cult of sensibility was ‘largely a female creation’ is noted by Stuart Curran, who claims, ‘If women tended to see different from men, it was axiomatic in the eighteenth century that they felt differently too’ (195). More important is Curran’s point that ‘The relative fame accorded Henry Mackenzie’s novella of 1771, *The Man of Feeling*, should not blind us to the crucial fact foregrounded in his title: that men, too, can feel. The obvious literary struggle on the part of women authors was to convince those men that women, too, can think’ (195). Claudia Johnson’s view that the feminine would still be derogated, regardless of how it was defined, remains significant in these debates. If we follow her reading, proof of this tendency to prioritize the masculine is how men came to dominate affectively, a phenomenon she argues robbed women of their emotional agency and expression (17).<sup>58</sup> Drawing attention to Wollstonecraft’s description of women as ‘equivocal’, Johnson explains that for this feminist writer, male emotional authority meant that ‘Under sentimentality, all women risk becoming equivocal beings’ (*Equivocal Beings* 11). She suggests that Burney and Radcliffe agreed with Wollstonecraft that the sentimental man has appropriated once-feminine attributes, leaving women ‘only two choices: either the equivocal or the hyperfeminine’ (12). Evidencing the lack of space for the specifically feminine, Godwin can only describe Wollstonecraft as a ‘female Werther’ (12), and Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolutions in France*, shows the author ‘not so much lamenting the fall of Marie-Antoinette as he is the fall of sentimentalized manhood’ (4). By the time Jane Austen’s *Emma* was written, admiration of the sentimental man had declined, to be superseded by new

less emotionalized figures of masculinity (Johnson 199). Such a movement away from the feminized man reflects an evolving problem with the feminine.

These fluctuations and variations in the way that women were perceived demonstrate the debate surrounding sex and gender that this thesis also addresses, from a new angle. An important part of my argument, outlined in chapters three and four, will be my examination of how Blake and Wollstonecraft engage with and redeem the feminine through their participation in these debates, but through a specifically Hartlean lens.

### **Emotion and Feeling in Romanticism**

As we have seen above, questions about gender were related to ideas surrounding emotion and feeling. Yet the nature and purpose of emotion was itself still contested. As early 1749, Lady Bradshaigh had asked Samuel Richardson (the first publisher of *Observations on Man*) to define or explain the term sensibility.<sup>59</sup> As Barker-Benfield remarks, understanding of the term varied: while for some writers this described ‘a rational moral sense, acting swiftly through the feelings, for others it meant the emotional aspects of human existence that preserved human beings from a too detached and cool rationality’ (Barker-Benfield 12). The difficulty in defining sensibility reflects a period where emotion was widely discussed in philosophical, moral, religious and medical terms. While René Descartes (1596-1650) had awarded status to the head rather than the heart in his Cartesian model of knowledge and reality, Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) developed Shaftesbury’s philosophy in order to discuss emotion in terms of benevolence, arguing that each person’s self-interest is synonymous to fellow-feeling since it naturally leads to happiness. His belief that emotions (rather than reason) will lead us to understand the nature of human actions leads Peter Duthie

to claim that ‘Hutcheson gave birth to a psychology of emotions’ (32). Hartley’s contemporary, David Hume, offered the opposite belief that reason ‘is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions’ (106), a contrasting view that reveals the vibrancy of debate about emotion in the early-eighteenth century. Hartley’s innovative model of the human being, united scientific, moralistic and religious ways of visualising emotion; from this point of view, physical experiences on the body were seen to possess an emotional charge that could develop a person’s morality and divinity. As will be examined in chapter two, this position saw emotion as a result of physical changes in the body that are mediated from the world through the senses in vibrations to the nerves and brain. Interestingly, as a result of this explanation for knowledge, all emotion, understanding, and even religious faith is physicalized and based only on the physical experience encountered by the body. Through this explanation, Hartley seemed to give an answer to the body-mind relationship, suggesting that these physical experiences are inevitably represented in the mind (which is also the ‘white medullary substance of the brain’) in a necessarily immaterial and therefore spiritual way.

I argue that after 1775 and into the late-eighteenth century, Hartley’s way of thinking about emotion as connected to the workings of the body, and grounded on the theories of Newton, Locke and Christian teaching, was seen as increasingly innovative. Initially, in 1749, Richardson had published *Observations*’ in its entirety and had written sentimental fiction which ‘next to the religion with which it overlapped, was to become the most powerful medium for the spread of popular knowledge of sensational psychology’ (Barker-Benfield 6). That Richardson wrote about emotion in such a scientific and specifically corporeal way reveals his acquaintance with *Observation* and the ease with which scientific knowledge would be transferred into literary and popular culture. This relates to Gillian

Beer's groundbreaking research that refused C. P. Snow's distinction of the 'two cultures' and opened up the field of Literature and Science in a way that lends itself to research on Hartley, Blake and Wollstonecraft.

While my own work does not position itself within the field of Literature and Science, it remains highly relevant considering that changing attitudes towards emotion were deeply associated with advances in medicine and anatomy. It was in the mid-eighteenth century that the 'emotional language of the body' came to be so highly valued, thus forming the period of sensibility and allowing the body to be regarded as a medium to represent and perform modern politeness (Goring ix). I will go into more detail about this in chapter two, where I place Hartley amongst contemporary scientific debates; however, I would like to note here the primacy of the nerves and brain in eighteenth-century discussion of emotion, science and belief. G. S. Rousseau argues that when Thomas Willis first published his writings of the autonomous brain (165), anatomists began to understand that, morphologically speaking, the nerves carry out tasks set by the brain (166). According to Rousseau, it was this shift in thinking that saw the brain and nerves to be viewed as all powerful, impacting on the way society thought about all other aspects of experience: 'First a revolution in knowledge about nervous man set in motion by certain paradigmatic works, had to occur and then the cults of sensibility, religious, social, moral, literary, merely fashionable, had to play themselves out' (175). Willis and his followers limited the soul to the brain, which meant that 'nerves alone can be held responsible for sensory impressions, and consequently for knowledge' (167). Research into the nerves proliferated and 'a physiological theory of perception' was able to explain all types of feelings (173), which impacted on the way a variety of writers could write about emotion. For Rousseau it does not matter, therefore, which writers (literary or scientific) expressed these scientific sentiments, since they are all rooted in the same theories

(173). Rather, his main interest is to assert that before the revolution in brain theory, any such notions of the brain or nervous man could not have been expressed.

As well as these scientific understandings and descriptions of emotion, Jon Mee's work on religious and political theories of 'enthusiasm' reminds us that the way emotion was expressed had both spiritual and social connotations. Excessive emotion in either religious or literary circles was made the object of suspicion and regulation (Mee *Romanticism* 14). This was a society where the memory of civil war was still widely associated with religious enthusiasm (Mee, *Romanticism* 24), and when the control of enthusiasm was a question of 'regulating a dangerously unstable internal force that threatened the integrity of both the individual and society as a whole' (23). While on the one hand, the role of feeling in this period was presented as the 'cultural cure' for a spiritually empty society (Mee, *Romanticism* 4), on the other, emotion also came to be considered as vulgar, potentially subversive and inferior to intellect, 'the monstrous alter ego of eighteenth-century civility' (24). As a result: 'Although enthusiasm in religious and other spheres did come to be increasingly valued as a humanizing and even healing power in the eighteenth century, the fear that the cure could become the poison remained' (23). This was an especially pertinent point in the revolutionary context of the later-eighteenth century. Marilyn Butler claims that sentiment and emotion were only treated with suspicion during the 1790s, especially because of the revolution, which is why 'Jane Austen derided the taste for sensibility as selfish and indulgent' and Coleridge found the 'rage for Gothic literature feverish, sickly, and subversive' (*Rebels* 36).

Emotion's actual importance for faith had long been debated and without final resolution. While the evangelical, Hannah More, expressed deep anxiety when she was accused of such 'enthusiasm' and Methodism during The Blagdon Controversy (1799-1803) (Stott 319-346), earlier in the century, Anna Barbauld's 'Thoughts on Devotional Taste'

(1775) reflects her disquiet that Dissent had become void of emotion.<sup>60</sup> For both, excessive emotion was still regarded negatively, but these two responses reflect the significance emotion held in a religious context. Methodism was notorious for its emotional component: during the conversion experience, members could become overcome with spiritual feeling and express deeply intense expressions of anger, fury or passion (Mason, *Enthusiasm*, 8). This was an experience which reflects the roots of this word, enthusiasm, ‘en’ and ‘theos’, ‘in God’ (Mason, *Romanticism and Religion* 8), and Wesley’s ‘Religion of the Heart’ undoubtedly inspired the Protestant Revival, the nature of which can be summarized in Coleridge’s own claim that he believed: ‘not because I *understand*’, but ‘because I *feel*’ (Mason, *Romanticism and Religion* 2).

Secular concerns with the power of fellow-feeling was also emphasized by Adam Smith, who regarded emotion’s ability to connect individuals in society, and reveal human beings’ inbuilt morality. He begins *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) by stating ‘How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others’ (3). Smith asserted that, although we can never fully access the hearts of others, we can affectively imagine what we would feel in the place of another. He also identifies the passions as a means to gaining insight into other people’s invisible sentiments. This leads him to contemplate our desire for others’ sympathy, as well as the concept of the impartial spectator, that real or abstract figure, who without vested interest will judge our behaviour based on what seems to be. As Elizabeth Fay says of the Romantic period: ‘emotion was thought to be a more pure response to nature and to other people than reason and proper behaviour alone’ and emotions ‘not only opened up knowledge of nature and of others, but also showed the depth of one’s soul, and gave a better insight into the individual’s personality than could be offered by outward appearance and behaviour’ (5). As



Smith senses that imagining the impartial spectator allows the person to learn the difference between behaviour that is praise-worthy, and that behaviour which merely evokes praise, so A.C. Waterman sees *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as expounding a detailed psychology according to which human action is motivated by a less-than-perfect balance of ‘sentiments’: self-love, justice, and beneficence or benevolence (914-918). According to Fay, the period’s interest in emotion subsequently formed the ‘basis for a beginning science of psychology’ (Fay 5); from her comments we can see Hartley himself as ‘pre-Romantic’, where his own ideas pre-empt popular ideas from the Romantic period.

### **Contributions and Definitions**

My focus on Hartley in this historical moment attends to the period’s feminist sensibilities and general concern with gender, as well as on-going debates about emotion that were increasingly centred around its basis in the theory of association or its relationship to the workings of the body. While I do not discuss the contemporary models of orthodox Christianity Blake and Wollstonecraft rejected, I am sensitive to the Protestant non-conformist Christianity that was necessarily responsive to these changing ideas. Hartley, Blake and Wollstonecraft each created their own model of God in terms of their radical politics. As I hope to have indicated, and will develop in this thesis, dissenting religion, emotion, and feminism, were deeply interconnecting, where changes in thought about one, impacted on attitudes towards the others. Furthermore, it is important to this study, that each could forward radical ideas about the potential of both men and women, inviting people into new ways of living outside of limiting gendered identities.

Key terms in this thesis are ‘Hartlean’, ‘emotion’, ‘feminist’, ‘religion’, ‘science’ and ‘saviour’. By ‘Hartlean’, I refer to both the specific ideas that Hartley discusses in *Observations* (to be explored in the next two chapters) and also to intellectual and progressive culture surrounding Joseph Johnson that made them newly relevant. Hartley’s synthesis of his Christian faith, belief in universal salvation, view of the mechanical body and mind, and his concept of emotional cultivation, presented an integrated view of life where religion and science were naturally co-dependent. For this reason I view the text as ‘religio-scientific’ and refer to the culture as ‘Hartlean’. Such an integrated approach may have lost popularity in the 1770s (shown in Priestley’s decision to modify the text), but the radical potential of *Observations*’ ideas had currency in the revolutionary climate of the 1790s where multiple viewpoints were welcomed and debated amongst Johnson’s coterie. Blake and Wollstonecraft are unique in uniting their interests in faith, politics and science, much unlike radicals such as Priestley, Hume or Paine. In this way, as well as emphasising the importance of David Hartley’s *Observations on Man* to Romantic Studies, new readings of Blake and Wollstonecraft emerge. These writers are seen to sympathize with the integrated approach of Hartley, making them unique in an intellectual culture that was beginning to separate religion and science.

In relation to ‘emotion’, the OED definition says this is ‘a mass noun: strong feelings, passion; (more generally) instinctive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge’. Another relevant and equally important definition focuses on its relational aspects: ‘any strong mental or instinctive feeling, as pleasure, grief, hope, fear, etc., deriving esp. from one’s circumstances, mood, or relationship with others’. This thesis uses the term ‘emotion’ to refer to how human beings experience the world through their feelings of pleasure and pain. Chapter two looks in particular at Hartley’s analysis of these pleasures and pains and

records how he classifies them. Namely, Hartley creates seven groups of pleasures according to their capacity to advance virtue and closeness to God. Hartley's is a psychological approach that accounts for the reasons behind human beings' various needs and pleasures. It is his view that each person necessarily passes through the different stages of pleasures until he or she gains awareness that only the selfless, pious ways of receiving happiness are long-lasting. It is at this point that he or she will reach the special state of 'self-annihilation'. I will discuss the differences between the eighteenth-century terms 'affection' and 'passion' in chapter two. While this vocabulary is more common in the eighteenth century, the word 'emotion' is used in the thesis as a broader more helpful term that denotes both bodily and mental pleasures and pains. Bodily and mental pleasures and pains are difficult to distinguish and for the purposes of the current study, any such distinctions are less important. In chapters three and four where emotion also has a central role in the analysis of the literary texts, the characters are examined in terms of their feelings, their pleasures and pains, and their ways of dealing with suffering and happiness. Emotion is at the forefront of the analysis and the way in which these characters are narrated points towards how Blake and Wollstonecraft value emotion and its uses for moral, religious and intellectual growth.

Chapters three and four are also interested to discuss the 'feminist' elements of the writers' work. By feminist I am interested in locating the way gender and women are treated by Blake and Wollstonecraft to promote the value of the feminine and women; 'the feminine' here refers to those attributes and values emerging from, or strongly associated with, women: this includes the maternal in both its corporeal and mental manifestations, but also the nature of female solidarity, women's experience of men, and female sexuality. 'Feminism' is of course not synonymous to these issues and their discussion does not promise the writers' feminist principles. Yet the discussion of gender and women in this period had important and

radical resonances. In terms of Blake and Wollstonecraft, their aspirations for fairness, progression and reform for women in society is clearly intertwined with the intellectual culture they inhabit.

Since this study is interested in Romantic culture, spirituality and faith are vital subjects for consideration. 'Religion' in this thesis refers to non-conformist Christianity (but not Catholicism) unless otherwise stated. Hartley, Priestley, Johnson, Blake, Wollstonecraft, and the most-part of the Johnson Circle, were all in important ways positioned outside of the Established Church because of their unusual views. While *Observations* and the radical intellectual culture surrounding it might also appeal to liberal Anglicans, it was dissenters from the Established Church that most upheld the text. This is especially apparent in the dissenting academies where it was studied.

'Science' in this thesis refers to a newly emergent understanding of anatomy - especially the nerves and brain - and the theories of Locke and Newton that inspired Hartley's theories of vibrations and association. These ideas are represented in both Blake and Wollstonecraft's work reflecting the currency of scientific ideas. In *Observations* the 'scientific' nature of the text is evident in the very first chapter: 'proposition one' states that 'The white medullary Substance of the Brain, Spinal Marrow, and the Nerves proceeding from them, is the immediate Instrument of Sensation and Motion' (I:7); when Hartley defends this proposition, he covertly draws attention to his own experience and authority as a doctor to explain further: 'This proposition seems to be sufficiently proved in the writings of physicians and anatomists; from the structure and functions of the several organs of the human body; from experiments of living animals; from the symptoms of diseases, and from dissection of morbid bodies' (I:7). Later discussion of muscular motion, respiration and the heart, as well as other bodily organs, situates the text as scientific and drawing from the most

recent ideas. *Observations* is also a theoretical text. With regards to Locke and Newton, the preface to the later edition of *Observations* (1810), establishes that ‘He [Hartley] took the first rudiments of his own work from Sir ISAAC NEWTON and Mr LOCKE: the doctrine of vibrations from the former; and the principle of association originally from the latter’ (I:viii). This is something that Hartley states himself to open the first chapter just before introducing proposition one:

The first of these doctrines [vibrations] is taken from the hints concerning the performance of sensation and motion, which Sir *Isaac Newton* has given at the end of his *Principia*, and in the questions annexed to his *Optics*; the last, from what Mr. *Locke*, and other ingenious persons since his time have delivered concerning the influence of association over our opinions and affections, and its use in explaining those things in an accurate and precise way, which are commonly referred to the power of habit and custom. (I:5).

The natural way in which Blake and Wollstonecraft draw from both scientific theory and their own more literary backgrounds reflects what Gillian Beer identified as the ‘two-way traffic’ between the now disparate disciplines.

Finally, female saviours and heroines are vital to chapters three and four, and to understand Blake and Wollstonecraft’s ideas about gender and feminism I analyse their portrayals of female figures. In this way both Blake and Wollstonecraft’s works are treated as cultural products since I am interested in identifying the writers’ radical ideas that could not exist in another context. Both Blake and Wollstonecraft saw themselves as prophets in the way they hoped to change their societies, and it is this aspect of their creations that is most important to the current work, especially with regards to feminism. In chapters three and four, self-sacrifice, or ‘the giving up of one's own interests, happiness, and desires, for the sake of

duty or the welfare of others' (OED), is seen as a fundamental part of the female characters' experiences. This points to my interest in saviours. Lindsay E. Rankin and Alice H. Eagly's definition of heroism links the actions of being a saviour and sacrificing the self so that heroism means 'taking risks, often risks of injury or death, to benefit others' (414). This definition corresponds to the concept of heroism in this thesis. Also relevant to the current research, they argue that such an idea of heroics is 'provocative in relation to cultural stereotypes of men and women' since 'risk taking is stereotypically and actually associated with men, whereas empathic concern for others' welfare is stereotypically and actually associated with women' (414). Rankin and Eagly continue to argue that despite the seeming androgyny implied in the term 'heroism', women have less opportunity to enact it because they are physically less powerful, have responsibility of childbearing and the nurturing of children, and are less able in general to enter into leadership positions (Rankin and Eagly 415). Chapters three and four take seriously the limitations placed upon women to be heroic and so view the heroism displayed by female characters in Blake and Wollstonecraft's texts as feminist, particularly considering the period under discussion.

Contributing to this view, Tien-yi Chao gestures to the underlying feminism represented in the female saints' actions: 'The dominant image of a Catholic female martyr or saint is one of a woman pious, virtuous, passionate, and disobedient of patriarchal authority, but ever devout to God. Although they ostensibly promoted feminine qualities (especially passiveness), their writings and behaviours were often not gendered or even 'masculine' in manner and tone' (747). Joan of Arc died young for her faith, being paradigmatic of the image of 'virtuous and passionate virgins dying voluntarily to glorify God' (Chao 747), and even if English Catholicism had been forced underground by the seventeenth century, the impact of its powerful imagery remained (Chao 746): the work of Protestant seventeenth-

century writer Margaret Cavendish ‘was clearly enchanted by such tales of devout Catholic women and attributed many of their qualities to her literary female characters’ (746), and Chao cites the influence of Catholic imagery on the male writers Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and even John Milton (746).

Alongside the symbolic power of the female saints, the most important woman in religious history, the Virgin Mary, maintained her powerful role in Britain even after the Reformation, what Gary Waller describes as ‘a surprising nostalgia for the Virgin and what she was, or could be imagined to represent, in human life, even if she underwent multiple and contradictory transformation’ (viii). The sixteenth-century reformists’ fears regarding people’s excessive devotion, false relics, and the proliferation of claims about miracles associated with Mary evidences the great power of this female figure that has on-going impact for Catholics. Mary became the ‘paragon of virginity’ that all women could choose to follow (Warner 68). Marina Warner explains that ‘Through the ascetic renunciation of the flesh, a woman could relieve a part of her nature’s particular viciousness as the Virgin Mary had done through her complete purity. The life of self-denial was seen as a form of martyrdom, and the virgin was encouraged to suffer physically’ (68). Furthermore, ‘Through virginity and self-inflicted hardship, the faults of the female nature could be corrected’ (69). These deeply-rooted concepts (going back to the Council of Nicea) point towards the positive associations of suffering in Catholicism, especially for women. Julia Kristeva saw the Virgin as ‘that combination of power and sorrow, sovereignty and the unnameable [...] one of the most powerful imaginary constructs known in the history of civilisation’ (Kristeva 60-61).

Yet despite the power behind these images, twentieth-century feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir are sceptical about the sacrificial characteristics associated with women.

Her observations demonstrate that the idea of female self-sacrifice is problematic regardless of the context. For her, women's tendency to place themselves in second place to benefit others has that sacrificial element that is forced upon them rather than chosen. De Beauvoir says about this: 'God did not spontaneously choose to create her for herself and to be directly worshipped in turn: he destined her for man: he gave her to Adam to save him from loneliness [...] she is naturally submissive [...] no man would consent to being a woman, but all want there to be women' (165). For this reason, the 'merciful and tender role is one of the most important of all those granted to women' and woman 'limits herself to enriching and softening' (204). While 'Male gods represent Destiny, on the goddesses side are found arbitrary benevolence and capricious favour [...] The Christian God has the rigours of Justice; the Virgin has gentleness and charity' (204). De Beauvoir also observes that the position of women is an important aspect apparent in the literary tradition and myths: 'She is the Grace that leads the Christian to god, she is Beatrice guiding Dante to beyond, Laura beseeching Petrarch to the highest peaks of poetry. She appears in all doctrines assimilating Nature to Spirit as Harmony, Reason and Truth. Gnostic sects made Wisdom a woman, Sophia; they attributed the world's redemption to her, and even its creation' (203). These comments and her various arguments expand from the famous line in *The Second Sex* that 'One is not born, but rather becomes, woman' (293), a concept that wants to liberate women from society's constraining image of them: 'it is not because mysterious instincts immediately destine her to passivity, coquetry or motherhood but because the intervention of others in the infant's life is almost ordinary [sic], and her vocation is imperiously breathed into her from the first years of her life' (293). Of course, this is the same argument of Wollstonecraft nearly two hundred years before, which Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler develop in different ways at the end of the twentieth century. The resonance between more



recent feminists with Wollstonecraft's views makes her depiction of female heroines all the more sophisticated and important to explore. In relation to Blake, it is the feminine qualities women are seen to possess that become all-important, and both men and women are able to assume them. We might consider that the most famous act of self-sacrifice was performed by a man in Christ's crucifixion, yet this act emerges from one who is not traditionally 'masculine' in his gender performance.

As well as providing new readings of Blake and Wollstonecraft, and intervening in how we view Romantic Studies, I aim to contribute to the fields of Romanticism and Gender, and the History of Emotion. Edited collections by Vivien Jones (2000), Eger (2001), Knott and Taylor (2005), and Labbe (2012), as well as recent monographs by Mellor (2002), Norma Clarke (2004), and Labbe (2003, 2011) show the continuing vibrancy of the field of Romanticism and Gender, where, since Stuart Curran's ground-breaking essay, 'The I Altered' (1988), the canon, gender in the Romantic period, and the meaning of Romanticism itself, have continued to be re-evaluated. Curran's famous essay radically altered perceptions of women writers by describing their immense success and popularity in the eighteenth century. Referring to the 'distortions of our received history' that are 'most glaring' (187), he corrects the male-dominated view of Romanticism, explaining that 'by the 1790s in Great Britain there were many more women than men novelists and that the theater [sic] theatre was actually dominated by women, all the more so as Joanna Baillie's fame and influence spread' (186-187). He adds: 'In the area of poetry [...] the place of women was likewise, at least for a time, predominant' (187). Curran's work invited future scholars to 'queer' the notion of Romanticism from a historical perspective, but he also intervened aesthetically, drawing attention to the distinctly female poetic, one for example, that was attentive to quotidian vales (190). As scholars came to identify writers of the period other than The Big

Six, they illuminated new understandings of the period and different ways of conceiving Romanticism. By the twenty-first century, interrogating previously accepted ideas about Romanticism was a well-established methodology, particularly with regard to women and gender.

Knott and Taylor's edited collection is important for this thesis, deriving as it does from a Feminism and Enlightenment project and covering wide-ranging topics and both male and female writers together. Women's intellectual, religious and political contributions are assumed (xvii) and illuminated, and the introduction states firmly that: 'Enlightened feminism in the 1790s was as convivial as it was iconoclastic' (xix). However, preceding this work, Mellor has long been associated with the field of Romanticism and Gender, ever since her book of the same name in 1993. Her most recent monograph, however, *Mothers of the Nation: Women's Political Writing in England*, builds on the earlier arguments from *Romanticism and Gender*, to argue that women 'participated fully in the public sphere as Habermas defined it, substantively shaping public opinion during the period' (142). In Mellor's view, women produced a new model of womanhood, contributed successfully to the abolitionist campaigns, and impacted on the mores of the nation in general. She argues for writers' 'ideological contestation and subversion' through literature, thus presenting politically-aware women, who were eager to comment on their society. Showing this in more detail, and intervening on our understanding of Romanticism, Labbe's work on Charlotte Smith is an excellent example of the unveiling of this female canonical figure to impact the field's understanding of gender. Labbe reminds us about Smith that she 'clearly saw herself as a writer who has a woman, rather than a "woman writer"', and as a result 'joined other writers of her period, notably, Mary Wollstonecraft, in querying the cultural conclusion that women were rendered other, irrational, lesser by virtue of their sex, and she expected those

around her to respect her autonomy as an adult, rational being' (*Writing Romanticism* 9). In her investigations into Smith's own astute use of her culturally-perceived gender, and her consequent 'play with gendered subjectivities' (*Culture of Gender* 96), Labbe invites us to re-think how we deal with women's (and men's) own understandings of their gender identity, where some writers could be aware of their culturally-enforced identities. In terms of Smith's sonnets: 'Although nominally the "I" is nominally "Smith" and hence feminine [...] the figure of the feminine is always assumed: adopted, rather than "natural", staged rather than authentic. This runs counter to the picture of Romantic subjectivity as coherent and self-contained' (*Culture of Gender* 95). As we can see, such a reading of Smith challenges simplistic interpretations of the writer, and therefore, of the period itself. Mellor and Labbe's work is the most relevant and inspirational to this thesis where I also aim to demonstrate how Blake and Wollstonecraft are participating attentively in public debates, and by so doing, intervene on our understanding of Romanticism. Romantic Studies does not usually take into account Hartley's work, especially in its entirety. By showing how the canonical figures, Blake and Wollstonecraft, are engaging with debates about gender through Hartley's work, I hope to suggest his importance to our study of the period.

The History of Emotion is another significant field to which my work contributes, and chapter two illuminates *Observations on Man* as a work fascinated by and founded on defining the potential and meaning of emotion. Important work by Teresa Brennan (2004), Daniel M. Gross (2006), Jenefer Robinson (2007), Thomas Dixon (2003-2012), Fay Bound-Alberti (2010), and Antonio Damasio (2000, 2004) (as well as the recent handbooks to emotion published by Oxford University Press in 2003 and 2010), evidences both the proliferation of research on emotion in the twenty-first century, and the ability for the subject

to speak to the various fields of Aesthetics, Literature and Science, Religion and Literature, History, and Neuroscience.

While Robinson's is an aesthetic and scientific approach that suggests the worth of reading literature through our emotions, Gross, Dixon and Bound-Alberti examine emotion from mainly historical perspectives: Dixon examines the etymology and use of words to describe emotion in the eighteenth century, showing how these terms became more secularized in the nineteenth-century turn away from Christian psychology; Gross compares the arguments of various philosophers and neuroscientists together, such as Aristotle, Descartes with the American neuroscientist Joseph Le Douarin, to reveal the striking similarities between them. Bound-Alberti is more interested in the history of science, examining how the medical understanding of the body interacted with cultural ideas about emotion, with a special focus on the heart's symbolic power. It is her view that our continued attachment to the heart as a representation of emotion reveals modern day science's current failure to explore emotion adequately, something that the more holistic early modern medicine was actually more able to do. Brennan takes a different approach by discussing emotion from the perspective of psychoanalytic theory. She argues that before a bounded idea of the self was established, people accepted that they were not self-contained but transmitted affects. In this somewhat Hartleian understanding of affective transmission, passions physically move from one person to another, impacting on how they feel. Similarly linked to Hartley, is the work of neuroscientist Damasio, who argues that emotions are chemical and neural responses, which we cannot control, but are elicited to protect the organism. Like Hartley, Damasio seeks to use science and the body to explain that which is often presented as unintelligible.

An approach to Hartley where he is read as a scientist would appeal to scholars like Sharon Ruston, who are interested in the relationships between Literature, Medicine and

Science. Ruston's excellent work on Shelley has allowed us to read the Romantic Period in new and exciting ways, refusing a dichotomy between literature and science, in order to explore how these two fields inform and interact with each other. This project is sensitive to Hartley's scientific approach to emotion, but I equally attend to how his science exists within an overriding Christian and theistic framework, and my main interest is not Hartley's role as a doctor, but rather his role as writer on emotion and happiness. Hartley is motivated by his inclusive religious ideas, and while he continually informs these with his medical knowledge, his primary goal is to prove the ultimate happiness of mankind. Emotional refinement may be dependent on commanding physical changes in the body, but it also provides a means to exerting a sense of free will and drawing closer to God. Hartley's is a democratic and utopian vision that disallows any person's (experience-based) behaviour to be impeached; as such, it demands equal opportunities and circumstances for all to enable their flourishing.

To explore these issues, chapter one focuses on *Observations on Man*, highlighting its content and the circumstances leading to its production and republications; and chapter two will explain why the text's preoccupation with feeling has often been side-lined in favour of its materialist connotations (especially Hartley's commitment to the theory of association and mechanical mind). It is my sense that Hartley's ultimate desire is to enable each person to reach God's level of perfection and happiness, which he sees as possible through emotional refinement. As I have already discussed in terms of Romanticism and Emotion, scholars have examined how emotion is gendered in the period in order to understand issues such as masculinity, feminism and gender-relations more generally. I build on this work in chapters three and four by examining Wollstonecraft and Blake's understandings of human experience that is both gendered and related to a physical understanding of emotion. Chapter three looks at how Wollstonecraft has a Hartlean understanding of emotion as corporeal and developed

by experiences. The chapter explores how she is able to discuss gender and emotional expression in more sophisticated ways, where the Hartlean culture she inhabits encourage her to uphold a feminine-identified and corporeally-based type of feeling that only women can experience. Wollstonecraft's work is examined chronologically. I begin with her abandoned novella *The Cave of Fancy* (being written in 1787), and *Mary, A Fiction* (1787). I then examine her greatest commercial success, the collection of short tales for children, *Original Stories* (1788). This is followed by the seminal *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and I conclude with her last novel *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman* (being written but unfinished in 1797).<sup>61</sup> By taking this approach, I suggest that Wollstonecraft's feminism is related to her growing familiarity with Hartlean concepts. In chapter four, I continue to examine literary engagement with Hartlean culture into the nineteenth century by looking at his prophecy *Milton* (1804-18[20])<sup>62</sup>, a work preoccupied with questions of gender, religion and emotion. I suggest that, in writing some time later, the artist-poet receives Hartlean culture in a more religious way, and is fascinated by the philosopher's vital concept of self-annihilation to re-explore the traditional images of female saviours. Blake works with a Hartlean understanding of emotion to suggest that women are more capable than men of possessing feelings that can be deemed heroic, even though such feelings can be enacted by either gender. For both Blake and Wollstonecraft, the learned nature of emotion (and especially its relationship to experience) enables them to promote the value of the feminine and the female, albeit with different expectations.

This study is a contribution to scholarship that seeks to illuminate the importance of Hartlean culture. Chapters three and four look at how Blake and Wollstonecraft, in the period 1778-1812, could invest value in Hartley's approach to advance feminist concerns. Hartley's

own inherent feminism is expressed in *Observations*' discussion of the relationship between husband and wife, where he writes:

The loving our neighbour as ourselves begins here. This is the first instance of it; and, where this love is mutual and perfect, there an entire equality of the two sexes takes place. The authority of the man is only a mark of our present degenerate state [...] Suppose the sexes to share all their joys and griefs perfectly, to have an entire concern for each other, and especially for each other's welfare, and they are, as it were, reinstated in paradise. (II.301)

Such sentiments reveal the radical vision of Hartley's message, and his desire for all people's happiness and restoration.

## Chapter One

### David Hartley and Joseph Priestley's *Observations on Man*

A vigorous exertion of the mental powers is necessary to make a man master of so capital a work as this; but he will be amply rewarded for that exertion. Knowledge of this kind tends in a very eminent degree to enlarge the comprehension of the mind, to give a man a kind of superiority to the world and to himself, so as to advance him in the scale of being, and consequently to lay a foundation for equable and permanent happiness. (Hartley *Theory of Mind* 370)

Joseph Priestley, in his conclusion to *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*

## Introduction

When *The Conclusion of the Late Dr Hartley's Observations on the Nature, Powers, and Expectations of Man* was published in 1794, the text's reviewer stated: 'Dr Hartley's *Observations on Man* are so well known, that we need not offer any strictures on a republication of his concluding chapter' (*The Monthly Review* 116). This comment testifies to the growing interest in Hartley's text after 1775, the year in which Joseph Priestley's abridged version was published allowing the philosopher's ideas to 'dominate British social and psychological thought' (Allen 2). Priestley's *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, on the Principles of the Association of Ideas with Essays Relating to the Subject of it* (1775) is the abridged version of *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty and His Expectations*



(1749). Yet, as indicated by the titles, these are quite different texts. Their dissimilar approaches mainly surround their contrasting emphases on religion and morality. Priestley's edition excludes the most part of Hartley's second volume, therefore bypassing *Observations'* discussions of Christianity, God, and his explanations regarding which pleasures should be made the 'Rule of Life'. Instead this later text focused on the theory of association and mechanical mind at the expense of Hartley's interest in universal happiness and God's benevolence. Ronald Hatch, who compares the two books, clarifies that although now new ideas were added, the impact of Priestley's changes radically altered Hartlean philosophy so that 'the conclusion is now entirely devoted to the consequences of Hartley's anatomical determinism' (Hatch 548).<sup>1</sup> The text's greater attention on the doctrine of necessity makes it an increasingly striking and polemical work that captured the attention of readers. Although my main concern is with *Observations*, the controversy surrounding the abridgement is vital to consider, as it not only highlights the period's developing interests, but also explains the later familiarity with Hartley.

To explore these issues further, this chapter provides the necessary historical detail and description of the two texts and indicates some of the main debates and ideas surrounding their publications. Such contextual information is necessary for our more focused analysis of emotion in chapter two, and for chapters three and four that focus on Wollstonecraft and Blake's engagement with Hartlean ideas. I begin the current chapter with a brief overview of *Observations*; I then discuss the intellectual background that led Priestley to publish *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*. Finally I offer a detailed summary of the full version of *Observations* and outline the republications of the text as they appeared in 1791, 1801, 1810 and 1834. In so doing, I contend that the renown and controversy surrounding Priestley's work and reputation initially dominated opinion of Hartley, until 1791 when this philosopher

became more widely-recognized for his theology and ethics. An argument for a ‘Priestlean’ to a more ‘Hartlean’ appreciation of *Observations* also reflects the changing cultural interests, and what can be seen as the shift from the Enlightenment to Romanticism. Initially the theory of the mechanical mind and doctrine of association took precedence, until the end of the eighteenth century, when there was increasing attention given to how spirituality and emotion, could be perfectly interconnected to scientific advances. Important here is how Hartley came to be accepted and re-appropriated outside of Priestley’s reputation and his specifically scientific approach. Hartley suggests a more holistic model of the body-mind relationship that demonstrates unification between scientific theory, faith and ethics, so his innovations were newly appreciated in intellectual circles that wanted to explore these ideas. As Marilyn Butler says, ‘a thinker probably becomes “influential”, that is, read, admired and echoed, because he has ideas in common with others, rather than because he initiates them’ (*Romantics and Rebels* 23). This chapter echoes Butler’s sentiments and suggests that the different ways Hartley was marketed after 1791 indicates the changing cultural interests of the period; this also helps us to understand how Blake and Wollstonecraft engaged with Hartlean culture themselves, and I will discuss the implications of their interests in my later analysis.

### **From Obscurity to Prominence: *Observations*’ Beginnings 1735 – 1775**

From the mid-1730s Hartley was already writing on religious and moral subjects, and articulated his intention to form a project that was inspired by his personalized Christian faith. In June 1735, his colleague and friend John Byrom reported reading ‘Dr. Hartley’s

paper upon benevolence', and by December 1736, Hartley mentioned to his closest friend John Lister 'two small Treatises', entitled 'The progress of happiness deduced from reason-& from scripture' (Hartley qtd Trigg 236). He told Lister of his belief 'that a Man [...] who entirely abandons Self-Interest & devotes his Labours to the Service of Mankind [...] is sure to meet with private Happiness' (Hartley qtd Allen 44). This is a central idea of *Observations* and in 1738, Hartley sent this same friend part of 'An introduction to the history of man [...] considering him in his corporeal, mental, moral, and religious capacities' (Hartley qtd Trigg 244–5). The final result was the culmination of all this work, *Observations*, published in 1749 by Samuel Richardson, the author of the widely-popular *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.<sup>2</sup>

Revealing to us the nature of Hartley's piece that was just as interested in Christian faith as it was the most recent theories of anatomy and association, is its organisation in two volumes that are meant to be read together. Volume One, 'Observations on the Frame of the Human Body and Mind and on their Mutual Connexions and Influences', is, as the title suggests, a detailed explication of body, mind, and their reciprocal relationship.<sup>3</sup> While most of Hartley's contemporaries subscribed to Cartesian dualism, the view that the mind is distinct from the body, Hartley suggested the mind's mechanism; he situated the mind within the body and seemed to answer the mind-body problem scientifically. Such a declaration reignited the debate about the existence of the soul, associating Hartley with the controversial act of denying its relevance. This volume runs to over 500 pages and covers three main issues: the theory of association and doctrine of vibrations; an elucidation of the five senses and the bodily organs; and finally, descriptions of the various types of pleasures and pains people experience including how these can be explained through the doctrine of association. This volume denies that any ideas, feelings or beliefs are innate. The pleasures and pains are classified into seven categories: sensation, imagination, ambition, self-interest, sympathy,

theopathy, the moral sense. As will be seen in the next chapter, Hartley's rigorous analysis of the emotions opened a debate about whether these can have meaning and value if they are caused solely by the body and association.

The second volume, 'Observations on the Duty and Expectations of Mankind', applies the knowledge of body, mind, and emotion, to suggest how each person ought to behave as part of God's creation. Like volume one, this part comprises of nearly 500 pages and also explores three main subjects: first, the benevolence of God; second, the arguments for the truth of the scriptures and Christian religion; and lastly, the scientific reasons why the pleasures of sympathy, theopathy, and moral sense, are the higher pleasures, and theopathy the 'Rule of Life'. Hartley's bold and academic claims for the validity and relevance of religion are consistent with his scientific theory, and would have been provocative to a late-eighteenth century readership, promoting increasing interest in Hartley's ideas.

As two liberal thinkers whose work is radical, but also indebted to Christian imagery and the most recent intellectual ideas, we can see why Blake and Wollstonecraft represent the 'Hartlean culture' that was sympathetic to this philosopher's thought. Hartley's innovative interpretation of the body and emotion, and his position as an outsider to dominant religious ideology, were newly attractive to radicals in the Romantic period. Hartley explains his approach to ideas, morality and emotion to suggest that all human beings are equal to God and destined to reach perfection/happiness through the intricate functioning of the body. This fundamental message of equality and human flourishing is shared by Blake and Wollstonecraft. Feminist Wollstonecraft's strongest claim for gender-equality supposes that God supports feminism himself in the way he created body and mind. She asks in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 'Gracious Creator of the whole human race! Hast thou

created such a being as woman, who can trace thy wisdom in thy works, and feel that thou alone art by thy nature exalted about her, - for no better purpose? – Can she believe that she was only made to submit to man, her equal, a being, who, like her, was sent into the world to acquire virtue?’ (87). Blake too is interested to see divinity within all of God’s creation, and in his well-known *Songs of Innocence*, the poet unites God and humanity: Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love are at once ‘God our father dear’ as well as ‘Man his child and care. / For Mercy has a human heart, / Pity a human face: / And Love, the human form divine, / And Peace, the human dress’ (*Selected Poems* 31).

By the time of *Observations*’ publication, Hartley was already a respected doctor in the capital and known to almost all physicians. While he had been educated at Cambridge and intended for the church (receiving his MA in 1729), by 1730 Hartley had felt he could not sign the Thirty-Nine Articles and had begun to practise medicine. The man’s low social standing in the eyes of his second wife’s<sup>4</sup> family gives us insight into his humble background. Allen summarizes well Hartley’s position:

Hartley, in the eyes of the Packers, would have been a nobody. He was the orphaned son of an obscure clergyman; a charity student at Cambridge; a nonconformist in religion, perhaps even an Arian or Socinian; a “doctor” without a medical degree, struggling to establish a practice in a country town – and not helping his career by publishing a pamphlet advocating the unpopular and controversial practice of variola inoculation for smallpox. To make matters worse, he had a young son (and heir) by his first wife. To Elizabeth’s brothers, Hartley could very possibly have looked like a fortune hunter. (33)

After the pair married in 1735,<sup>5</sup> Hartley regularly dedicated himself to philanthropic projects. He gained prestige as a doctor in London by ensuring the publication of a medicinal recipe for bladder stones (Allen 54).<sup>6</sup> Yet despite his relative fame, *Observations* went largely unnoticed before the more renowned Joseph Priestley's attention.<sup>7</sup> Allen suggests that this could have been because it was accepted as another contribution to the Newtonian paradigm 'albeit with a distinctively religious slant' (Allen 376).<sup>8</sup> Priestley however, believed the initial lack of interest was especially due its complicated nature and the extensive range of subjects covered.<sup>9</sup> His 1775 abridged version re-popularized Hartley, being more accessible than the original and considerably shorter at only 372 pages. As stated, this consisted of material taken mainly from volume one of *Observations*, although select passages relating to the mechanical mind were included from volume two. Hartley's work relating to the vibrations and anatomical disquisitions were removed as too 'difficult and intricate' (Priestley iii). However, it is less acknowledged by scholars that Priestley explained well the ideas surrounding the vibrations in his own introductory material.

### **Popularizing Hartley through Priestley's Fame**

Priestley's renown is important to consider when evaluating why Hartley came to be newly popular in the latter part of the century. According to Jeffrey Barclay Mertz, he was 'clearly the most important member of the Johnson circle' (Barclay Mertz 5) and had been friends with Johnson since 1765 (Tyson16), working closely with him for over forty years (Chard *Bookseller to Publisher* 140). David L. Wykes and Isabel Rivers draw attention to Priestley's widespread specialisms and voracious intellect: 'He was a prolific author, publishing works

on grammar, rhetoric, history, and political theory, besides electricity, optics, and experimental chemistry. He was a theologian, a philosopher, an educationalist, a historian, as well as a scientist' (1). While Priestley wrote more than 200 books, sermons, pamphlets, and essays (2), in their view, 'his life's work' was 'his religion and his ministry', where his theological writings were 'crucial to the development of Unitarianism and helped to transform the religious landscape of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' (1-2). This fascination for religious questions made Hartley an especially appealing figure for Priestley. Towards the end of the century, he was the editor and commentator for Johnson's publication of Hartley's *Conclusion* (1794), the section from volume two of *Observations* that alluded to the looming apocalyptic revolution. However, long before this time, having read *Observations* himself between 1752 and 1755 at the dissenting academy in Daventry (Allen 11), Priestley wrote of the work in strongly moral and spiritual terms, claiming that it:

Produced the greatest, and in my opinion the most favourable effect on my general turn of thinking through life. It established me in the belief of the doctrine of necessity [...] it greatly improved that disposition to piety which I brought to the academy, and freed it from the rigour with which it had been tinctured. Indeed, I do not know whether the consideration of Dr Hartley's theory contributes more to enlighten my mind, or improve the heart. (Priestley qtd Wykes and Rivers 27)

Priestley became Arian at college, a religious position that subscribed to the view that Christ was not fully divine, and it was Hartley's theory that allowed Priestley to confidently replace the Calvinist idea of man's natural depravity, with a scheme that looked toward mankind

attaining perfection under a benevolent God (Wykes and Rivers 27). James Dybikowski specifically credits Hartley's work as solidifying all Priestley's most important metaphysical and epistemological ideas, namely: the association of ideas; the theory of necessity; and materialism (Dybikowski 81).<sup>10</sup> However, as Priestley's own comment (seen at the beginning of this chapter) reveals, Hartley also enabled a personal change in the philosopher. These were sentiments reiterated by Harriet Martineau, who later reported about this man's abridgement 'That book I studied with a fervour and perseverance which made it perhaps the most important book in the world to me, except the bible' (Martineau qtd Allen 3).

Yet the impact of Priestley's work also made Hartley a controversial figure. Allen informs us that Priestley's publication of *Examination* (1774)<sup>11</sup> and *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* (1775), ignited 'public controversy – first in the pages of *The London Review* and then of the Nonconformist periodical *The Monthly Review*' (Allen 376). These debates, he explains, were then prolonged in the periodical press by the publication of several books criticising Priestley and Hartley; the first of these was *Letters on Materialism and Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*, published anonymously, by the liberal Roman Catholic priest Joseph Berington (1776) (Allen 376). This went on to receive a positive review in *The Monthly Review* in February 1777, and in 1785, Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid also criticized Hartley and Priestley in his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Mind* (Allen 377). In publishing *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777) (which developed the ideas most interesting to Priestley from Hartley), Priestley responded to the anger against him, noting that after *Hartley's Theory of the Mind*, 'the cry against me as an *unbeliever* and a *favourer of atheism*, was exceedingly general and loud' (viii). To begin his defence, the Preface to *Disquisitions* quotes the particular paragraph from Essay I of the text that had led to such controversy:



I am rather inclined to think that though the subject is beyond our comprehension at present, man does not consist of two principles, so essentially different from one another as *matter* and *spirit*, which are always described as having one common property, by means of which they can affect or act upon each other; the one occupying space, and the other not occupying the least imaginable portion of space, but incapable of bearing relation to it; insomuch that, properly speaking, my mind is no more *in my body*, than it is in the moon. I rather think that the whole man is of some *uniform composition*, and that the property of *perception*, as well as the other powers termed *mental*, is the result (whether necessary or not) of such an organical structure as that of the brain. Consequently, that the whole man becomes extinct at death, and that we have no hope of surviving the grave but what is derived from the scheme of revelation. (xx)

Rather than retracting this claim from the earlier text, *Disquisitions* is framed around explaining why there is more likely to be one, not two, distinct substances. The consternation caused by this text was further intensified in 1782, when Priestley published *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, which attacked the doctrine of the Trinity, the concept of original sin and the atonement, leading Priestley to be accused of encouraging scepticism and atheism (Wykes, *Priestley Theologian* 41-42). As Wykes points out, ‘it was the way in which he applied Hartley’s materialist psychology that particularly disturbed the orthodox [...] for most orthodox Christians [sic] belief in the immateriality of the soul was an essential belief in the afterlife’ (42). Priestley went on to engage in a series of high profile debates with local clergy during the 1780s that exacerbated relations between high churchmen and dissenters (Wykes qtd Priestley *Theologian* 43). It was the strength of his arguments that led Arianism

to be replaced by Unitarianism (48), and according to Wykes, ‘By 1790 Priestley had become such an irritant to the orthodox that they almost came to see him as the devil incarnate’ (42). Being widely perceived as a supporter of the French Revolution and enemy of the Church, Priestley was regarded with suspicion, both politically and religiously. This was the reason why his house, library and laboratory were destroyed in the Birmingham Riots of 1791. He was finally forced to leave England for America in 1794. These details regarding Priestley are significant, because they allow us to reflect on the way in which Hartley would have been inevitably linked to controversy in the minds of a late-eighteenth century readership.

### **Priestley’s Additional Essays for *Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind***

Yet the reasons why Priestley was captivated by Hartley remained radical even by the time of the 1791 publication because of their connotations. Hartley was seen to have updated the theory of association, superseding Locke’s own associationist thought with a doctrine of vibrations to explain all mental states, including the passions, volitions, reason and moral ideas. This approach to knowledge was in opposition to popular philosophers such as Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson who maintained a belief in innate ideas. Moreover, Hartley’s work on association strengthened the doctrine of necessity and materialism for those like Priestley who were sympathetic to the materialist perspective. However, more than gesturing to Hartley’s influence or his own support of the ideas, Priestley submerged his own thought with the earlier philosopher’s work. This is especially true for the preliminary essays that he wrote for *Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind*. The condensed version of *Observations*, which was designed to reach a wide readership, endorsed the image of the two

men as in sympathy with each other's ideas and aims. I will discuss volume one (that makes up *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*) in the next section in detail; here I focus on Priestley's essays preceding and concluding the text because they indicate his alterations and the general tenor of the work. The preliminary essays explain some of the first volume's ideas clearly to both increase the reader's understanding and direct his or her interests. As Priestley explains in the text, his hope was to 'facilitate the study of *Dr Hartley's Theory*' (13) so as to establish 'the true science of human nature' (Hartley, *Theory of Mind* 13). However, these essays also depict a specific portrait of Hartlean theory and alter *Observations*' emphasis. This is useful in indicating to us how Hartlean theory would have been interpreted or understood, and what impression Priestley hoped to portray of the philosophy. Considering that this text popularized Hartley and caused so much controversy, my brief analysis helps us understand its ethos and importance.

Essay I reiterates Hartley's main arguments, describing how the nerves transmit ideas from the external senses to the brain. The mind and brain are conflated as one and the same throughout this discussion, even more strongly than in Hartley's work, and Priestley upholds the doctrine of vibrations as a valid hypothesis for explaining how sensations and ideas are conveyed to the mind/brain. Priestley discusses this theory in some depth, especially commenting on how the brain can retain a disposition to some vibrations more than others, or how similarities of vibrations may confuse the brain when ideas are registered (xv-xvi). As the first essay that readers experience in *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*, this piece impresses the significance of taking a scientific approach to the human body, and focuses the attention on the doctrine of vibrations, even if it is removed from the main text. Priestley agrees with Hartley that vibrations cause ideas, and the emotional emphasis of the doctrine of

vibrations is maintained, since Priestley comments that this explains the differences between pleasure and pain (xvi, xvii).<sup>12</sup>

A religious component remains in Priestley's work. Essay I asks that readers embrace the new thinking about vibrations because the Creator purposefully designed the brain in such a way to be understood by humans. The conclusion to the essay poses the most controversial idea that the 'business of thinking should be made to depend of mere *matter*' (xix). Explaining his own more radical views compared to Hartley, Priestley concedes that Hartley, 'notwithstanding his hypothesis [...] supposes that there is an intermediate *elementary body* between the mind and the gross body: which may exist, and be the instrument of giving pleasure or pain to the sentient principle after death' (xix). However, it is the later philosopher's view that it is not necessary to propose the immaterial soul in order to believe in the afterlife: 'I see no reason why his scheme should be burdened with such an incumbrance as this' (xix). Priestley is clear that in his view, belief in that which is 'non-physical', such as the soul, only reveals lack of understanding about the body. Yet regardless of the overt materialism espoused by Priestley, he still references the afterlife and the Hartlean concept that animals and plants may, like humans, be able to have life after death, an idea that Priestley suggests must please all benevolent minds (xviii-xix).

Essay II, 'A General View of the Doctrine of Association of Ideas', establishes the basic concepts of association and argues that Locke's version of the theory is 'imperfect' since he views love of happiness as innate, and does not appreciate the theory of necessity. Priestley reinforces that all phenomenon of the mind may be reduced to association, including: memory, judgment, the passions, the will, and the power of muscular motions. In terms of emotion, Priestley states that all passions are modifications of fear and love, and he

clarifies that even the most personal feelings of love for a person develops only because he or she makes the agent happy. As these Hartlean ideas are summarized so succinctly within such a short essay, they are made more prominent compared to Hartley's discursive text. Clear from Priestley's writing is that he is most impressed by the way in which Hartley does away with instincts through the doctrine of association and this idea gains most importance in his version of *Observations*.

Finally, the last essay, 'Of Complex and Abstract Ideas of Sensation', emphasizes again the difference between Locke's and Hartley's theories to demonstrate the latter's more complete and valid philosophy of the mechanical mind.<sup>13</sup> Priestley explains that in Hartley's view, it is only due to some ideas' complex nature that their origins cannot be traced, and he impresses the point that ideas only originate from experiences on the senses. Developing this, Priestley enforces his belief that all ideas of right and wrong are also formed through association (and therefore mechanically),<sup>14</sup> and he points to the relativity of morals in different times and countries to support the claim (xlvi). We must recall the implications of this idea of a 'mechanical' approach to the person that so captures Priestley's thinking. Hartley had stated in *Observations*:

By the mechanism of human actions I mean, that each action results from the previous circumstances of body and mind, in the same manner, and with the same certainty, as other effects do from their mechanical causes; A person cannot do indifferently either of the actions *A*, and its contrary *a*, while the previous circumstances are the same; but is under an absolute necessity of doing one of them. (I:500)

This way of thinking about each person's behaviour assumes that all human beings are the consequences of experiences impressed on the body over time. As such, sensations, which are called by Hartley 'those internal feelings of the mind, which arise from the impressions made by external objects upon several parts of the body' (I:i) are most important, the building blocks that create all the remaining more complex ideas, knowledge, feelings of pleasure and pain and beliefs. Proposition VIII details precisely that 'Sensations, by being often repeated, leave certain Vestiges, Types, or Images, of themselves, which may be called, Simple Ideas of Sensation' (I:56). As detailed here and explained further in the chapter, 'sensations', also known as 'simple ideas' (I:56), combine to form all other ideas. Hartley calls the more intricate ideas 'intellectual' and 'complex' (I:56) to distinguish them from 'simple ideas'/'ideas of sensation'.

As well as contributing these essays to the text, Priestley adds a short two and a half-page section towards the end entitled 'On the Practical Application of the Doctrine of Necessity' that could be easily mistaken as Hartley's work. The essay develops and justifies the doctrine of necessity, but maintains a religious dimension. Priestley begins with the provocative assertion that: 'The doctrine of philosophical free-will is the cause and support of much pride and self-conceit', where men 'take the merit of good actions to themselves' (Priestley 365). The writer concedes that while those who believe in the doctrine of mechanism are not necessarily humble, the scriptures themselves ascribe all to God, which enables people to more easily become pious. He reiterates the Hartlean idea that 'we have nothing we did not receive from him [God]' and so 'there can be no reason in ourselves, why he should select one, rather than another, for an instrument of glory in this world' (366). Furthermore, by accepting this point of view, Priestley suggests that we 'must greatly accelerate our progress to humility and self-annihilation' (366). These are states that Hartley

most upholds according to his 'scale of perfection' (II:275), where the 'gross pleasures' are the pleasures of sensation, imagination, and ambition, while the higher pleasures are those of sympathy, theopathy and the moral sense (II:275), pleasures that depend on generosity and selflessness. Hartley says in particular (to conclude his discussion regarding self-interest), 'we ought never to be satisfied with ourselves, till we arrive at perfect self-annihilation' which is paired with 'pure love of God' (II:282).

Priestley completes his single-volume text by writing his own conclusion, drawing attention back to the issue of innate ideas and asking that *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* be received as a further declaration against the concept. As such he appeals to Thomas Reid, to 'either frankly acknowledge the oversights with which I have charged him, or with the same spirit with which he wrote his book, stand forth in its defence' (372). Reid was founder of the Scottish School of Common Sense and in his own *Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common-Sense* (1764), he criticized what he termed 'the theory of ideas' represented by Descartes, Malebranche, Locke, Berkley and Hume. Rather than accepting that every object or idea is an impression or faint copy of some original, he suggested that our ideas correspond to some higher truth that allow us to make judgements based on perceptions, innate knowledge and common sense:

If there are certain principles, as I think there are, which the constitution of our nature leads us to believe, and which we are under a necessity to take for granted in the common concerns of life, without being able to give a reason for them - these are what we call the principles of common sense; and what is manifestly contrary to them, is what we call absurd. (Reid 85)

By referring to Reid, Priestley claims the relevance of Hartley's work in 1775 to answer unresolved debates regarding ontology.

Blake and Wollstonecraft reveal ambivalence towards a Priestlean (materialist) model of Hartley in favour of his own more 'Romantic' interest in emotion, faith and the immaterial. While we cannot be certain that they read either Priestley or Hartley's texts, the issues Blake and Wollstonecraft confront (and how they are narrated) enable us to see their affinity with the Hartlean synthesis of religion and science. This affinity draws attention to the Hartlean culture of this period and how Blake and Wollstonecraft share his inclusive approach to multiple ideas.

### **'The great demand there has been for it': *Observations* in 1791**

This thesis is most interested in Blake's and Wollstonecraft's engagement with Hartlean ideas and culture between 1787 and 1810, a time when curiosity about David Hartley was strong enough to demand repeated republications of the original version of *Observations* in full.<sup>15</sup> The numerous publications until 1834 are testament to the text's popularity, and from them we can assume the publisher's faith in Hartley's marketability and the sustained interest in Hartlean philosophy.<sup>16</sup> While Johnson produced a second edition of the abridgement in 1790, the following year he republished the original 1749 version twice: first into a three volume quarto, and then in a rarer folio edition. Blake's engraving of Hartley from an original painting by Schakelton was available for sale from Johnson (see appendix). Joseph Johnson's journal, *The Analytical Review*, which reviewed this 1791 text, alluded to the public curiosity



surrounding Hartley, ‘We are happy to find that, by the assistance of Dr. Hartley’s family his *Observations on Man* [...] is now reprinted, the great demand there has been for it of late having made it difficult to procure a copy’ (Q.Q 361). Johnson then published the original *Observations* twice in 1801 in its third and fourth editions. A fifth edition of the original was published in 1810 in Bath and sold by Wilkie and Robinson in London. Finally, this full text was published in 1834, in the original two parts, by Thomas Tegg and Son.<sup>17</sup>

Volume One of *Observations* is almost identical to Priestley’s *Hartley’s Theory of the Human Mind*. However, as stated, the latter’s removal of Hartley’s work on the vibrations from within the main text (and the reduction of discussion regarding the bodily organs) presented a much shorter text whose primary concern was the doctrine of association and the theory of the mechanical mind. I suggest that it was the religious and radical aspects of Hartley’s *Observations*, combined as they were with scientific theories of association and vibrations, which allowed Hartley’s work to retain appeal after 1791. Priestley’s earlier attention had generated initial interest in Hartley’s ideas about the body and association, but Hartley was most concerned to investigate happiness as an emotional state that had both religious and moral implications. His view of Mankind opened up a new way of seeing the Christian faith where every person would eventually reach Heaven because of his or her bodily functioning. When Hartley understood how a state of pleasure could be developed physically in the body and maintained, he used *Observations* to transfer this knowledge to readers allowing them the opportunity of drawing close to God. As such, his text can be seen as an explication of why the physical body has both spiritual and moral ramifications. The remainder of this chapter provides a summary of *Observations* that will be helpful for the forthcoming chapters. It will draw attention to the more religious and open-ended nature of Hartley’s work.

## Volume One: Priestley's Edition, with Additions

Part One of *Observations* begins with the text's four-page Preface, which draws the reader's attention to what Hartley suggests are the most important subjects covered in the first volume, namely: the doctrine of association, the consequent doctrine of necessity,<sup>18</sup> and the universal happiness of mankind. Important to notice here is the apologetic tone with which the author claims his adherence to the doctrines of 'the future punishment of the wicked' and 'practical free-will', two theories that seem to be rejected in the text. Defending *Observations* from criticism, Hartley is keen to establish the relevance of the doctrine of association to religion: 'From inquiring into the power of association I was led to examine both its consequences, in respect of morality and religion, and its physical cause' (I:iii). This comment alerts us to Hartley's curiosity to physicalize that which seems invisible (I:v) and thereby illuminate the reality of religious experience in a scientific manner.

Yet, alongside his materialist leanings, Hartley still affirms the traditionally dualistic view that 'Man consists of two parts, body and mind' (I:i). Body is thought to be 'subjected to our senses and inquiries, in the same manner as the other parts of the external material world', while the mind 'is that substance, agent, principle, &c. to which we refer the sensations, ideas, principle, &c. to which we refer the sensations, ideas, pleasures, pains, and voluntary motions' (I:i). The author will expand on these definitions later in the text, however, before this time, he goes on to outline the most important terms. First he indicates the relationship between Sensations ('Ideas of Sensation') and Ideas ('Intellectual Ideas'),<sup>19</sup> where both of these are internal feelings. Most significant here is that 'the Ideas of Sensation are the elements of which all the rest are compounded' (I:ii).

The various pleasures and pains experienced are categorized under seven classes, which become vital for Hartley's later discussion of morality and perfection. These classes are: Sensation (the impressions made on the external senses), Imagination (natural or artificial beauty or deformity), Ambition (the opinions of others concerning us), Self-Interest (our possession or want of the means of happiness, and the security from, or subjection to, the hazards of misery), Sympathy (the pleasures and pains of our fellow creatures), Theopathy (the affections excited in us by the contemplation of the Deity), and the Moral Sense (moral beauty and deformity). Important here is the concept that an idea is internal (as opposed to an impression) and that pleasures and pains are also all ideas and internal feelings; Hartley notes further that all internal ideas and feelings are 'attended with some degree of either pleasure or pain' (I:ii) to emphasize the ubiquitous nature of emotion. Also defined in preparation for the text's later discussion are: Memory, Imagination (or fancy), Understanding, Affection, Will, and the automatic and voluntary motions. This selection of terms re-appears in Blake and Wollstonecraft's writing, reminding us of the importance of language in actually forming ideas and concepts. The Introduction confirms the book's three main aims: to discover the general laws for how ideas are generated; to prove if association is at work in all aspects of the body's functioning; and to analyse the intellectual classes of pleasures and pains.

Chapter One of *Observations* examines the doctrine of association and the doctrine of vibrations with continued reference to the body. The brain, spinal marrow and nerves are identified as 'the immediate instrument of sensation' (I:7) while the white medullary substance is located as that which enables ideas to be presented to the mind (I:8). Hartley is specific and precise in his descriptions: external objects are said to 'impress vibratory motions upon the medullary substance of the nerves and brain' (I:12) (which is, according to Hartley, 'the seat of the sensitive soul' (I:31)), and these vibrations are enabled because of the

‘very subtle and elastic Fluid’, the aether (I:13). Hartley explains the process by which ideas are registered in the brain through vibrations: ‘We are to conceive, that when external objects are impressed on the sensory nerves, they excite vibrations in the aether residing in the pores of these nerves, by means of the mutual actions interceding between the objects, nerves, and aether’ (I:21), and ‘when these vibrations enter the brain, they begin to be propagated freely every way over the whole medullary substance’ (I:24).

One of the most interesting concepts introduced in chapter one, is that sensations leave traces of themselves in the form of corresponding ideas, where the most vivid ideas we experience are those that have been impressed most vigorously (I:56). Hartley concludes: ‘The influence of association over our ideas, opinions and affections, is so great and so obvious, as scarce to have escaped the notice of any writers who has treated of these’ (I:65). As I will discuss in the next chapter, it is important to appreciate the power of this new way of thinking about emotion and personality as not innate, but capable of being changed. Yet, where this is particularly innovative, is in the emphasis placed on the physical nature of this association: sensible ideas are ‘conveyed to the mind by corporeal causes upon the medullary substance, as is acknowledged by all physiologists and physicians’, thus, ‘the powers of generating ideas, and raising them by association, must also arise from corporeal causes’ (I:72). The philosopher explains further, arguing that the generation of ideas occurs from the ‘subtle influences of the small parts of matter upon each other as soon as these are sufficiently understood’ and he reiterates the ultimately ‘material causes upon our ideas and associations’ (I:72). With the growing acceptance that a person’s physical experiences form his or her identity, it is not surprising that radical writers and reformists could be so interested in depicting how material circumstances dictate opportunity and could be changed to enable greater equality.

The way in which associationism lends itself to radicalism is less discussed by Hartley, although in volume two he does reveal how the theory invites every person to become Godlike and achieve his or her rightful happiness. The implications of the theory are vital for religion and morality in this way. As it is so important to his project, the theory of association is explained particularly clearly to his reader: ‘Let the sensation *A* be often associated with each of the sensations *B*, *C*, *D* &c i.e. at certain times with *B*, at certain other times with *C*, &c. it is evident [...] that *A*, impressed alone, will, at last, raise *b*, *c*, *d*, &c all together i.e. associate them with one another’ (I:73). However, Hartley is still attentive to the complexities that accompany this theory, and shares these as part of his discussion: associations occur most clearly ‘provided they belong to different regions of the medullary substance; for if any two, or more, belong to the same region, since they cannot exist together in their distinct forms, *A* will raise something intermediate between them’ (I:73).<sup>20</sup>

Certainly, another vital aspect of Hartley’s thesis is precisely the distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions, where those actions that we control by thought are voluntary, and those that originate from the mechanism of our nature are involuntary or automatic. Hartley’s readers are reminded of the complexity of this difference, which is not always easy to distinguish: ‘association not only converts automatic actions into voluntary, but voluntary ones into automatic’ (I:104). This is owing to the fact that, ‘After the actions, which are most perfectly voluntary, have been rendered so by one set of associations, they may, by another, be made to depend upon the most diminutive sensations, ideas, and motions, such as the mind scarce regards, or is conscious of, and which therefore it can scarce recollect the moment after the action is over’ (I:104).<sup>21</sup> Actions that are voluntary can seem mechanical because they have been so well practised through constant associations; in the

same way, we learn to exert control over those actions which may have at first, come naturally.

Chapter Two examines how association and vibrations relate to the five senses and the motions of the body. Included is a section on specific body parts and functions: the organs of generation, the heart, the action of respiration, walking, handling, and speaking. Priestley removes much of this detail, although offering an overview of the main points and ideas. This section mainly comprises of Hartley's notions of how the body works, but most important to our study is how he still depicts the entire body and its organs as highly sensitive and acting as an intricate machine that responds to any impact.

Chapter Three begins with a discussion of words where the author notes language's relativity and its power to enlarge or give new understanding (I:306). The philosopher proposes a dictionary so that we might 'come to understand one another perfectly' (I:285). Words are able to raise up painful or pleasant vibrations in the nervous system, 'by being often associated with such' (I:285). Language changes over time so that 'the language, which Adam and Eve were possessed of in paradise was very narrow [...] It might also be monosyllabic [...]' since the first ages of the world were more visual than intellectual (I:297-298). 'God made use of visible appearances or actions [...] God himself condescending to appear in a visible form, perhaps a human shape, to them' (I:297-298). Hartley reads the development of language according to events in the Bible such as the fall and great flood. However in his view, God gave language to Adam and Eve, that was 'without any deficiency, superfluity, or equivocation' (I:315), a time when they lived in 'perfect unmixed happiness' (I:298). Now, 'as human life is, in fact, a mixture of happiness and misery, so all our languages must, from the difference of our associations, convey falsehood as well as truth'

(I:320). Hartley looks towards a time when people are ‘making a progress in pure unmixed happiness’ and ‘capable of both expressing their own feelings, and of understanding those of others, by means of a perfect and adequate language’ (I:320). From this perspective, people ‘might be like new senses and powers of perception to each other’ (I:320).

Continuing from this work on words, the philosopher comes to ask how people can agree or disagree with propositions. This is related to the association of ideas everyone attains to words. Memory is recorded as implicated here, and a bodily capacity depending ‘entirely or chiefly on the state of the brain’ (I:374); however imagination, reveries, and dreams are dependent on the state of both body or mind. When Hartley comes to discuss the ‘Imperfections in the Rational Faculty’ and human beings’ ‘Deviations from sound Reason’ (I:390), he looks at a variety of examples, including children and the elderly’s lack of reason, as well as the effects of drunkenness, deliriums, violent passions, which ‘disorder the understanding and judgment while they last’ (I:398), and melancholy. In this way, Hartley aims to understand why ‘Mad persons differ from others’ and ‘judge wrong of past or future facts of a common nature’ and are ‘violent and different’ from others in their affections and actions (I:390). Most interesting to the philosopher is why these people act ‘contrary to their true happiness’ (I:390). He also takes sex differences into account when contemplating emotional feelings, so the ‘disordered states of the uterus’ cause melancholy in women, while the organs of digestion cause it in men (I:399). While Hartley is not overt about the feminist implications of his theory, he does expect all people, regardless of class or sex, to work hard to improve their emotional nature. For him, as will be seen, this has important ramifications for individual relationships with God.

This chapter in *Observations* closes with a discussion of animals' faculties, comparing them to human beings, and even suggesting the spiritual potential of 'vegetables'. This is an interesting aspect of Hartley's work that is striking because unexpected amongst the discussion of the specifically human experience of life in such detailed terms. However, it is also vital in encouraging a new vision of the human, in terms of their physical composition and means of acquiring knowledge.

Hartley's view of creation is radical in this text, especially with regard to animals, and part one prepares the reader for part two where the brutes' significant role in the Bible, their fellow-suffering as part of the Fall, and their subsequent duty to show devotion to God is referenced (II: 430). Hartley comments that: 'There is not an atom perhaps in the whole universe, which does not abound with millions of worlds; and conversely, this great system of the sun, planets, and fixed stars, may be no more than a single constituent particle of some body of an immense relative magnitude' (I:247). This is to suggest that 'every thing when considered as part of his [God's] infinite wisdom & goodness, will gratify our utmost expectations, since we may, in this view, see that every thing has infinite uses and excellencies' (I:247). Hartley questions the ethics 'taking away the lives of animals, in order to convert them into food' which 'does great violence to the principles of benevolence and compassion' (II:222). This is owing to their similarity to humans, who may be 'members of the same mystical body' which would 'increase our tendency for them' (II: 223). While it is conceded in part one that animals are perhaps 'far inferior' to Man, they nonetheless have a 'general resemblance of the body' and 'of the mind also' (I:414), since the power of association is equally evident in 'the whole nature of each brute' (I:414). Hartley concludes his discussion by stating simply: 'We seem to be in the place of God to them, to be his



viceregents, and empowered to receive homage from them in his name. And we are obliged by the same tenure to be their guardians and benefactors' (I:415).

Chapter Four ends the first volume by describing the remaining six intellectual pleasures and pains: ambition, imagination, self-interest, sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense. Hartley reiterates that, by examining each, we can understand how 'the intellectual pleasures and pains are deducible ultimately from the sensible ones' and that 'the power of association [...] can also shew, that associations, sufficient in kind and degree, concur, in fact, in the several instances of our intellectual pleasures and pains' (I:417). He is direct about the power of association to explain each of the passions, not only giving examples throughout this section, but concluding that association 'will, of itself, exclude all other causes for these pleasures and pains, such as instinct for instance' (I: 417). The 'Conclusions; containing some remarks on the Mechanism of the Human Mind' suggests the necessity of human actions. This is often the most well-known aspect of *Observations* because of its materialist implications and its commitment to the doctrine of necessity: 'By the necessity of human actions I mean, that each action results from the previous circumstances of body and mind, in the same manner, and with the same certainty, as other effects do from their mechanical causes' (I:500). According to this theory, Hartley re-defines free will as 'Free-will under certain limitations', that is 'the power of doing what a person desires or wills to do, of deliberating, suspending, choosing, &c. or of resisting' (I:501). This is not only 'consistent with the doctrine of mechanism, but even flows from it' because:

voluntary and semi-voluntary powers of calling up ideas, of exciting and restraining affections, and of performing and suspending actions, arise from the mechanism of our

natures. This may be called free-will in the popular and practical sense, in contradistinction to that, which is opposed to mechanism, and which may be called free-will in the philosophical sense. (I:501)

Ultimately, the point Hartley wants to enforce is that ‘a person cannot do indifferently either of the actions *A*, and its contrary *a*, while the previous circumstances are the same; but is under an absolute necessity of doing one of them, and that only’ (I: 500). He makes the point once again that, ‘as soon as we discover created intelligent beings not to be real causes, we should cease to make them objects of either gratitude or resentment’ (I:506). This view promotes forgiveness of others’ weakness and discourages the worship of anyone for their strengths.

Before examining Volume II, we should note that, rather than suggesting that the theory of association is wholly straightforward, Hartley concedes that it is complicated and intricate. He explains this through his notion of ‘decomplex’ ideas and actions. The OED definition of ‘decomplex’ (cited as originating from Hartley) reminds us that this term refers to that which is increasingly complicated. ‘Decomplex’ means: ‘Repeatedly complex; compounded of parts which are themselves complex’. This understanding of the word points towards Hartley’s sophisticated theory that takes into account the inherently involved nature of association itself. Although the term decomplex is referred to briefly by the philosopher, the discussion surrounding it reveals the elaborate nature of Hartley’s work which may at first seem to reduce accounts for knowledge and action to homogenous mechanical processes. By illuminating this concept, we can understand the nuances in Hartley’s work.

As already stated, complex ideas are all those ideas that human beings naturally develop from simple ideas. According to Proposition XII, Volume 1, 'Simple Ideas will run into complex ones, by Means of Association' (I.73). However, 'decomplex' ideas are more complicated, because the associations formed are much looser and more difficult to identify. Despite this, Hartley continues to emphasize that the same principle of association is at work in their creation: 'As simple ideas run into complex ones by association, so complex ideas run into decomplex ones by the same' (I:77). Where the relationship differs is in the necessarily sophisticated nature of complex ideas that lead more complicated associations to be generated: 'the varieties of the associations, which increase with the complexity, hinder particular ones from being so close and permanent, between the complex parts of decomplex ideas, as between the simple parts and complex ones' (I:77). The point Hartley wishes to make is that association does not develop in the same way at all times, especially when associations arise from intricate sources, such as complex ideas.

However, what is not often acknowledged is that Hartley also gestures to the fact that association between simple and complex ideas can also be complicated and does not necessarily occur in a linear fashion. In some cases it is impossible to actually ascertain the source of complex ideas because 'the number of simple ideas which compose the complex ones may be so great, it may happen, that the complex idea shall not appear to bear any relation to these its compounding parts, nor to the external senses, upon which the original sensations, which gave birth to the compounding ideas, were impressed' (I.75). In this case 'each single idea is over-powered by the sum of all the rest, as soon as they are all intimately united together' (I:75). In the same way, it sometimes happens that 'The simple ideas of sensation are not all equally and uniformly concerned in forming complex and decomplex ideas' (I.77), but rather, 'some simple ideas occur in the complex ones and decomplex ones

much oftener than others' (1:77). To illustrate this point about the varying nature of association, Hartley compares the relationship between languages, meaning, letters and words. The constituent parts of a decomplex or complex idea are not always easily identifiable to their particular corresponding parts, just as 'what happens in real languages; some letters, and combinations of letters, occur much more frequently than others, and some combinations never occur at all' (I:77). In terms of decomplex ideas, these might seem to bear no relation to the simple or complex ideas, but this is much like the meaning of our sentences that do not bear direct relationship to the individual words (or letters) used to form them (I:79).<sup>22</sup> This is why we understand sentences - and agree or disagree with their meaning - outside of the particular complex ideas, or words, that individually form them (I:79).

We should consider that decomplex actions and ideas enable living creatures to survive in the world. Ideas, which are formed through input from the senses, provide the vital data that enables animals and humans to perform actions. Hartley describes physical actions as either 'automatic' or 'decomplex'. While automatic actions refer to those that exist already within the body's natural functioning (such as the heart beat or movement of the bowels) decomplex actions appear similarly 'natural' and spontaneous, but are in fact highly cultivated over time, and learned. Unlike automatic actions, decomplex actions allow a level of creativity because they combine a connection to the present circumstances as well as to the past and memory. For this reason, Allen interprets Hartley's notion of decomplex actions by stating that these movements are 'what matter most' (171); they 'enable people and other animals to conduct themselves in the world' (168). These most sophisticated actions rely on collections of complex actions, but they interact with the environment. An animal's ability to stalk and pounce is an example of a decomplex action that might lead to its survival, while its

physical expression of the instinct to hunt is the complex action (Allen 171). Decomplex skills first require the ability to perform complex actions, which are based on synchronous associations (making them a conditioned reflex). Decomplex actions are based on successive associations, so they become a sustained sequence of action. Language is another important example of a highly decomplex activity that responds to the present moment, continually shifting, relating to, and changing according to new associations and situations. Allen uses the experience of a pianist to give a explanation of decomplex actions:

The virtuoso plays, it seems, effortlessly. But the novice student of the piano peers at the music and says to himself, “The bottom line of the staff is E, and let’s see, E on the piano has no black key to its right.” The tune proceeds slowly, as the student gradually gains a voluntary control over the movements of his hands relative to the keyboard. After some practice, the actions of stroking the keys are triggered automatically by the associated visual signals without any calculation on the student’s part. Playing the piano thus becomes a matter of creating multiple direct links between visual, auditory, ideational, and motor elements. The better one learns to play, the more tightly are these drawn together, and the less need is there for recourse to “intervention of the idea, or state of mind, called will.” With enough practice, one sits down at the piano and plays Chopin. Or perhaps more accurately: one sits down at the piano, and the music plays. (169)

As the above example demonstrates, decomplex actions allow living beings to perform movements in special ways. Complex movements go from being voluntary to becoming increasingly ‘secondarily automatic’ (based on memory but seeming automatic),<sup>23</sup> because

they are formed by associations that ‘include motion and are synchronous’ (Allen 170); decomplex movements like dancing or playing a musical instrument are ‘continuous and self-sustaining processes that integrate sensory, ideational, and muscular activity’ (Allen 170). As already stated, the most interesting and important aspect to decomplex actions is that while they are also ‘secondarily automatic’ they are very much connected to the present kinetic, auditory, visual, emotional and interpersonal flows of perception, as well as existing in relation to memory (Allen 171). In this way decomplex movements are involved in an interactive system that responds to other circumstances around the living being. They use our learned skills, but they can also be further perfected and adapted if needed. Decomplex actions are not just the effects of previous stimuli (like complex actions), but are in a constant state of continuation according to ongoing associated circumstances. They seem to become ‘second nature’ only because they are so often performed: ‘In the perfection of any of the skilled repertoires of action required for the performance of decomplex movements, the greater the expertise developed through practice, the less the performer direct his attention to the movements themselves, and the fewer interventions of the will’ (Allen 168).

If decomplex actions become ‘secondarily automatic’ this is thanks to the mechanism of the mind and the body, since the body memorizes highly specialized skills and then performs them without the person willing it consciously. We can see how such a concept has fundamental implications for the notion of free will, because the mechanism of the body develops inevitably while the living being acquires new skills, knowledge and associations. In this sense, ‘the mechanism of mind and body is not a despotic given; rather, in a sense, it is an achievement’ (Allen 168). The mind and body are seen as actively taking part in becoming mechanic, even though the human being might initially learn to perform actions and try to develop self-control. As will be seen, this idea of the body becoming mechanic (and

physically altering as it does so) is central to Hartley's theory; it is his hope that being Godlike will become secondarily automatic, even though the person must initially practise hard to develop a Godlike nature. We can see that any problems a person might have in establishing a divine nature may be owing to the inherent complexity and irregularity of the theory of association. However, persistence and continued dedication are a possible means to transformation.

## **Volume Two: Reinstated in 1791**

It is the second volume of *Observations* that develops the idea of human beings being potentially perfect and divine, especially if they choose to be. Volumes one and two are symmetrical, comprising of an introduction, four chapters, and the conclusion.<sup>24</sup> According to the introduction of Part Two, 'Observations on the Duty and Expectations of Mankind', this text aims to study 'The duties of piety, benevolence, and self-government' (II:ii) that are 'so evidently conducive to both public and private happiness here' (II:ii). As this suggests, Hartley's project aims to ascertain how these three qualities will procure our '*summum bonum*, our greatest possible happiness, during the whole course of our existence' (II:ii-iii), and in relation to this, he makes claims for 'the goodness of God' and God's 'readiness to protect and bless us' (II:i). The volume is first grounded on the belief that 'our only hope and refuge must be in the infinite power knowledge, and goodness of God' (II.i), and Hartley's understanding that God wants everyone to be happy. The benevolence of God is an interpretation of the deity to which both writers, Blake and Wollstonecraft, subscribe. Such a

view enables their radical beliefs for equality and tolerance, particularly where this regards feminism for Wollstonecraft, or human weakness for Blake.

Hartley places God within an overriding 'scientific' system of the world so his descriptions about God are abstract and based on logic rather than scripture. This reflects the writing I study in chapters three and four, where the deity symbolizes the theoretical views of the writers, a benevolent force that supports the particular equality they endorse. Hartley's wish in volume two is to comfort mankind by increasing their understanding about their future and their own faith. He acknowledges that 'there are difficulties both in the word of God, and in his works' (II:ii), but he aims to 'deduce the evidences for the being and attributes of God, and the general truths of natural religion' as well as 'the evidences for revealed religion' (II:iii) to 'lessen' these. Finally, he hopes to 'accommodate' all these subjects to his foregoing theory of the mind (II:iv).

Hartley provides a positive insight into faith. Chapter one, 'On the Being and Attributes of God and of Natural Religion' (II:iii), is characterized by a strong advocacy of God's benevolence: 'God is not extreme to mark what is done amiss' and 'he is loving to every man; that his mercy, his tender mercy, is over all his works, &c.' (II.431). The message of God's goodness and benevolence is reiterated over seventy pages, using different examples, especially as these relate to the doctrine of association; Hartley unites his belief that every organism necessarily desires its own private happiness, with his understanding of a benevolent God, so that he cannot see malevolence as able to exist within God's nature (II:20-21). God, as well as people, is governed by the mechanical laws of the universe. As such, religion does not presuppose free-will in the philosophical sense, and the philosopher's mechanical approach leads him to suggest that popular or voluntary liberty does not 'afford



sufficient foundation for commendation and blame, for the difference between virtue and vice, and for the justice of punishing vice' (II.60). This encourages his argument for the equality of mankind, where each person is only a compound of past physical experiences. The supposition that one does not choose his or her nature encourages new ways of regarding every individual, demanding tolerance, while also accepting each person's potential to change.

In Chapter two 'Of The Truth of the Christian Religion', the author argues at length for the genuineness of the scriptures, especially for 'the truth of the facts contained in them', and their divine authority, 'as that we need not fear to make them the rule of our lives' (II.83). He draws on his previous arguments about virtue and good emotions to prove the veracity of scripture, so: 'Christ, the prophets, and apostles, make an express claim to a divine mission. Now, it cannot be reconciled to God's moral attributes of justice, veracity, mercy, &c. that he should permit these persons to make such a claim falsely [...] Their claim is not, therefore, a false one, if we admit their credentials' (II: 79-80). This is a view that sees such power in the purest states of pleasure that cannot admit any darkness or malice. Hartley then elucidates the truth of the prophecies, miracles, Christ, and the current state of the Christian religion, all with close reference to the Bible to affirm their authenticity. The close familiarity contemporary readers had with the Bible allows us to appreciate the interest with which they would have engaged with these debates and the systematic method of analysis that appeared in volume one.

Chapter three 'Of the Rule of Life' enquires into how each person can live his or her life and Hartley reminds readers that this must be according to the will of God, who is again labelled 'infinitely benevolent [...] holy, merciful, just, and true, who has sent us into the

world to make ourselves and others happy' (II:196). Happiness is a vital theme for Hartley in this half of the text. Man is suggested as 'endued with a desire of attaining happiness, and avoiding misery' (II:196) and also 'in some degree fitted to attain happiness' (II:197). For this reason, and from the mechanism of the human body, he agrees with the view that sees Mankind as inevitably predisposed to virtue above vice (II:199-200).

Hartley had answered the question of suffering in part one to establish which pleasures from the seven classes should be made the primary pursuit or the rule of life. Sensation is rejected, because indulgence in these pleasures would soon 'destroy the bodily faculties' (II:211) as well as 'the mental faculties, the apprehension, memory, imagination, invention' also because 'it exposes men to contempt' (II:212). Neither should the pleasures of the imagination be made the rule of life, since those who devote themselves to these pleasures do not appear any happier than the rest of the world (and the pleasure of them 'cloys' owing to the fact that the human fancy can only focus on a select few pleasures of imagination at any given time). The pleasures of honour in the class of ambition can lead to self-conceit and pride, and the pleasures of self-interest are considered counter-productive, since 'the pursuit of the means of happiness cannot be the primary one, because, if all be means, what becomes of the end?' (II:275). Important here is Hartley's note about rational self-interest (the pursuit of such things, believed to be the means for obtaining the greatest possible happiness). The philosopher does not allow that this must 'always have a necessary influence over us' (II:277)<sup>25</sup> because 'the scriptures inculcate many other motives, distinct from hope and fear such as the love of God and our neighbour, the law of our minds, &c. i.e. the motives of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense' (II:278). He re-affirms his belief that any desire that focuses only on the self will extinguish love of God and neighbour; as a

result, refined and rational self-interest can only be considered virtues when they cherish benevolence, piety and the moral sense.

Owing to the emphasis on these qualities, the Pleasures of Sympathy can be made a primary pursuit, because not only do they improve those pleasures of sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest, but they also unite with the pleasures of theopathy and the moral sense.<sup>26</sup> For a similar reason, the pleasures of theopathy can be made a primary pursuit and an ‘ultimate end’, since theopathy ‘regulates, improves, and perfects all the other parts of our Natures; and affords a pleasure superior in kind and degree to all the rest’ (II:309). Finally, the Pleasures of the Moral Sense ‘ought to be made the immediate Guide of our Actions and on all Sudden Emergencies’ and therefore ‘its Pleasures may be considered as making ‘Part of our Primary Pursuit’ (II:337).<sup>27</sup> Hartley’s main point is to establish the vitality of God for virtue, where we cannot possess a moral code without first loving him.

Hartley ends his text with a section on Christian politics relating to the Jews’ restoration to Palestine, and what this signifies in Messianic terms. This section of the text was later re-published in 1794 and 1795, when prophecy was becoming so respected and important in terms of the revolutionary culture. We should recall that the final apocalypse and Christ’s return was assumed, rather than debated in the eighteenth century, so this fits in well with Hartley’s eagerness to produce work on moral and religious subjects. The last chapter considers ‘the final Happiness of all Mankind in some distant future state’<sup>28</sup> where he asserts his belief, established from reason, that all men will be ultimately happy. Hartley admits that we cannot expect much happiness in the world (II:364), but he is clear that happiness comes when the self is annihilated and replaced with the pure love of God and neighbour (II:387). The importance of this point cannot be overstated as it frames the narrative of *Observations*,

especially relating to the categorisation of the pleasures. As we have seen, those pleasures that are most benevolent and least to do with self are the greater pleasures that should be made primary pursuits.

According to Hartley the person does not only have one chance to reach the perfect state of self-annihilation. In his view the soul will be in a state of inactivity from death to resurrection, and: ‘these two great events will fall upon two contiguous moments of time, and every man enter directly into heaven or hell, as soon as he departs out of this world’ (II: 402). However, the author reminds readers of Christ’s reign on earth (II:400) and rejects the concept of eternal punishment, preferring to conjecture that ‘Some imperfectly good persons may also receive what remains of the necessary purification’ (II:403).<sup>29</sup> This gestures again to Hartley’s optimism that self-annihilation is a state of happiness that will be attained by all. This means that ‘the evils of a future state will have the same tendency, and final cause, as those of this life, viz. to meliorate and perfect our natures’ (II.419).

Hartley has a positive view of suffering, reminding the reader that ‘all evils that befall either body or mind [...] have a tendency to improve one or both’ (II:419).<sup>30</sup> In terms of chastisements from God, these are only ‘fatherly chastisements’ intended to ‘amend and perfect, not to be final and vindictive’ (II:425); on Hartley’s view, no sinners are ‘hardened beyond the reach of all suffering, of all selfishness, hope, fear, good-will, gratitude, &c’ (II:425) and it is ‘highly unsuitable to the benevolence of the Deity, or to the relations which he bears to us, according to the mere light of nature, that infinite irreversible misery, to commence at death’ (II.425). He asks, ‘can it be supposed, that an infinitely merciful Father will cast off his son utterly, and doom him to eternal misery?’ (II:424). Rather he is hopeful for the future: ‘We see numberless instance of persons at present abandoned to vice, who yet,

according to all probable appearances, might be reformed by a proper mixture of correction, instruction, hope and fear' (II:424-425). There is opportunity for each person, since 'what man is neither able nor willing to do' is 'both possible to God, and actually effected by him' (II:425). This second volume of *Observations* has a message focused on enabling human flourishing and happiness through knowledge of God and emotion. It is an optimistic and radical message that sees every person as equal and deserving of happiness.

Contemplating potential hostility from those who fear the consequences of publically affirming the doctrine of universal happiness for all, Hartley sees only positive effects of its acknowledgement: 'The motives of love are infinitely enhanced by supposing the ultimate unlimited happiness of all', because 'This makes us embrace even the most wicked with the most cordial, tender, humble affection' (II:437). In conclusion, Hartley discusses the factors he believes endanger Christendom, and avows that each person must let Christ reign over himself or herself, in preparation for the second coming (II:455).

### **Volume Three: A Commentary to Volume Two**

By rejecting the second volume, Priestley's text was not so emotionally-engaged or philanthropic in its aims. However, the publication of the two-volume work meant that in 1791, the emphasis of *Observations* was altered, presenting the text as predominantly a religious and ethical piece. This feeling was increased further with the publication of the *Notes and Additions*, a detailed commentary that gave support to part two of Hartley's text. The editor writing in the *Analytical Review* explains that the third volume of notes was added

‘by the advice of some literary friends, who are well acquainted with the author’s work, and thought they would form a valuable addition to it’ (v). The presence of the notes and additions meant that two-thirds of the complete text became newly dedicated to religious and ethical concerns.<sup>31</sup> This gave further authority and credence to Hartley’s religious and Christian image, especially because the author, Andrew Herman Pistorius, was a rector and doctor of theology (as well as expert in English philosophy). Pistorius had interpreted the text as most interesting for its religious debate and only supported by scientific theory and psychology. He explained in the text:

I found, that of the two volumes of Dr. Hartley's work in English, [...] the second only was properly fit for my purpose [...] I therefore contented myself with giving a short though sufficient abstract of the first volume, which contains the association of ideas; but the second volume I have thought necessary to divide into two, and amplify it with my own observations.  
(Pistorius qtd Fairchild 1012)

As a result of this admiration, the text is written as a companion to volume two, and structured according to each of Hartley’s ‘Propositions’ in order; the reader can easily cross-reference with Hartley’s volume for further expansion or general corroboration with each of his points. Pistorius generally endorses Hartley’s ideas, rather than contributing new ones. As Fairchild states, Pistorius’ support is achieved ‘mainly by intelligent but long-winded paraphrase, repeating Hartley's points in different words, supplying additional illustrations, and sometimes answering imaginary objectors with arguments of his own’ (Fairchild 1015). Pistorius agrees with Hartley’s fundamental views and the two writers differ only in matters

of emphasis, rather than in matters of content (Fairchild 1016). Fairchild's succinct summary of their differences is worth quoting in full as a means to understanding the third volume:

He [Pistorius] finds, however, that under the first head of pleasure of sensation he [Hartley] seems here and there to have introduced an unnecessary and almost ascetic strictness, and a monkish morality. Coleridge would like the protest against Hartley's grudging attitude toward the study of the polite arts. Hartley regards the Biblical prophecies too literally for Pistorius' taste: he prefers a more "figurative and spiritual" interpretation. As a Lutheran pastor, albeit a very heterodox one, he does not consider Hartley's views on the requirements for salvation, "sufficiently clear and methodical," and he makes up for this deficiency by fifty-six pages on the interdependence of faith and works. (1016)

As a religious thinker who supports Hartley's Christian project, Pistorius appeals to readers to consider the doctrines of mechanism and necessity as in harmony with faith and ethics: 'When the reader reflects, that this treatise on religion is the second part of a work in which Hartley considers the nature of man, and treats the mind and body altogether as machines, he will probably take it up with mistrust and prejudice, and condemn it as irrational, without examination' (Pistorius 458). He continues to explain however, that 'The chain of his reflections, and the development of his system, will remove from the mind of every thinking and impartial reader, that mistrust which may arise from the prejudice of commonly received opinions' (459). He refutes any notion that the doctrine of mechanism will destroy religion or morality (458-459, 459) to instead draw attention to Hartley's significant theme, the happiness of mankind: 'The end of morality and religion is, unquestionably, the happiness of

mankind' and man is 'endued with the power of being rationally virtuous, and is made capable of religion' in order that he may 'attain that happiness appointed for him' (459). This text is most useful for a reader who already maintains Hartley's theories and seeks their further discussion and support from varying perspectives. Yet the publication of Pistorius' religious approach to *Observations* also re-popularizes volume two against its previous neglect, and promotes a holistic understanding of the work for future readers.

The twenty-page biography of Hartley, prefixed to the beginning of *Notes and Additions* was written by Hartley's son, and framed the philosopher as deeply religious, uninterested in radicalism, and supportive of the Church of England. I see this biography as presenting a purposeful contrast to the perception of Priestley (with whom Hartley could still be associated); the editor is also able to encourage a new reading of *Observations* that asks readers to see the text as specifically Christian and only ingeniously informed by science and psychology.<sup>32</sup> Hartley Jr establishes two important points in this biography: first he argues that Hartley in no way thought philosophy or Literature was a substitute for the Christian religion;<sup>33</sup> and second, he claims that the philosopher was committed to the idea of an immaterial soul.<sup>34</sup> The most controversial aspect of this short piece is the author's reference to the potential wisdom in the doctrine of 'thinking matter'. In gesturing to the doctrine of materialism, Hartley Jr suggests that 'The materiality therefore of the sensitive soul is precluded by the definition of matter being incapable of sensation. If there be any other element capable of sensation, the soul may consist of that element; but that is a new supposition' (xv-xvi). This passage can be read as revealing a belief in such a capability, and relates to Hartley's suggestion of vegetables' potential for sensation and spirituality (and the more general claim of matter's yet unrealized powers): 'If we could suppose that matter may [...] be endued with the most simple kinds of sensation, it might then attain, according to the



demonstrations of the author's theory, to all that intelligence of which the human mind is possessed' (xvi). It is significant that this biography goes back to this point as it demonstrates the importance and on-going controversy of the issue, that not only humans have a soul or vitality. It also gestures to the new spiritualisation of the body and matter. The last two pages of the biography describe Hartley's general character in idealistic terms, referring to him as the emblem of moderation, happiness and benevolence: 'He was addicted to no vice [...], his features regular and handsome' (xviii); 'He never conversed with a fellow-creature without feeling a wish to do him good' and 'His whole character was eminently and uniformly marked by sincerity of heart, Simplicity of manners, and manly Innocence of mind' (xviii-xix).

### **Marketing Hartley: Other Editions and Texts**

*Observations* was marketed in these increasingly religious terms from 1791 until 1810, representing the growing appreciation for his scientifically-informed approach to emotion and spirituality. For example, after the 1791 edition of the text, two sections from Hartley's second volume were published: in 1793 (and 1798), *Of the Truth of the Christian Religion From "Observations on Man," &c. Part II. By David Hartley, M.A* was produced.<sup>35</sup> This was 162 pages of Hartley's work that focused on scripture. In 1794 and 1795, the conclusion of Hartley's *Observations* was published as *The Conclusion of [...] Dr. Hartley's Observations on the Nature, Powers, and Expectations of Man; strikingly illustrated in the events of the present times, with notes and illustrations by the editor*. This was another copy from volume two, marketing Hartley as an authority on Christian matters. The text was edited by Priestley,

representing his unwavering support of Hartley and his respect for the philosopher's ability to be prophetic. Priestley's advocacy of the text allowed Hartley to remain associated with a radical context that at this time might have appealed to Blake and Wollstonecraft's political sympathies; in 1794, Priestley was writing just after The Birmingham Riots<sup>36</sup> and in the year of his departure for America.

The third edition of *Observations*, published by Johnson in 1801 was entitled: *Observations on Man: to which is prefixed a sketch of the life and character of Dr Hartley*. This continued the Christian emphasis of the 1791 text by including the 'religious biography' as part of the main text, and still republishing the *Notes and Additions*. The fourth edition by Johnson, *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty and his Expectations*, was also published in 1801 and came in the original two volume format, representing the sustained interest in the full text even more than in Priestley's abridged version. The fifth edition (1810)<sup>37</sup> appeared in two octavo volumes and was printed in Bath by Richard Cruttwell and sold by Wilkie and Robinson, London. This was made increasingly religious because the same biography was prefixed to the text before volume one, and Hartley's prayers and meditations were added for the first time. A large full-page portrait of the author was also printed at the front of the text, engraved by J. Heath, from an original painting by Shackelwell (see appendix). Like Blake's engraving after Shackelton, this image portrayed Hartley as the 'man of feeling' where he appears similar to Shaftesbury. Finally, the sixth edition from 1834 was published in the original two parts, by Thomas Tegg and Son, 'revised and corrected'. *Observations* was translated into German in 1772, French in 1801, and Italian in 1809 (Allen 3).

## Conclusion

Just as the later republications of *Observations* aim to express, Hartley's research is a religious endeavour, aiming to bring comfort and prove mankind's future happiness. It is then also an emotionally-interested work, made rigorous through its in-depth discussion of scientific theories and anatomy alongside the systematic approach.<sup>38</sup> As the next chapter will demonstrate, the affections and passions are essential to Hartley's worldview particularly because they are so deeply related to people's spiritual relationship with God. Hartley's letter to his sister written in 1735 explains well the combined religious, scientific and emotional nature of his work, and I think, gives us an insight into his motivations in writing:

I have lately gained the knowledge of some things in physic, which have been of great use to me; but the chief of my studies are upon religious subjects, and especially upon the true meaning of the Bible. I cannot express to you what inward satisfaction these contemplations afford me, You remember how much I was overcome with superstitious fears, when I was very young. I thank GOD, that He has at last brought me to a lively sense of his infinite goodness and mercy to all his creatures; and that I see it both in all his works, and in every page of his word. This has made me much more indifferent to the world than ever, at the same time that I enjoy it more; has taught me to love every man, and to rejoice in the happiness which our Heavenly Father intends for all his children and has quite dispersed all the gloomy and melancholy thoughts which arose from the apprehension of eternal misery for myself or my friends. (Hartley qtd Allen 78)

As Hartley explains well here, how he affectively related to his faith was of primary importance in offering him spiritual understanding and hope for his future. John Corrigan argues that it was only in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the role of emotion in religion was increasingly investigated by writers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto, Sigmund Freud and William James, all of whom ‘proceeded on the assumption that human emotionality was a constituent element of religious life’ (Corrigan 7). *Observations on Man*, first published in 1749, can be seen as a relevant forerunner to these debates, answering questions about faith and emotion in a period still undecided about how to deal with their relationship. The following chapter will look closely at Hartley’s understanding of emotion and I demonstrate its vitality to his philosophy, and its relationship to the culture, which has been overlooked by recent scholars.

## Chapter Two

### Emotion and Feeling in Hartley's *Observations on Man*

It is due to feeling (friendship, love, affection), that one human being is different from others  
[...] It is due to feeling alone that a thing becomes freed from abstraction and becomes something individual and concrete. (Weil, *Lectures* 59)

#### Introduction

The above epigraph is at the heart of this chapter's concerns, as I respond to the critical legacy that too often situates *Observations on Man* apart from scholarly discussion of feeling or the attentive emotional experience of the world gestured at by Weil. Hartley's text envisions a corporeal, mechanistic view of body and mind, where free will is rejected in favour of mechanical associationism, and the final aspiration is each person's self-annihilation to God's level of perfection. However, despite Hartley's seeming dismissal of emotion's importance, the text is most interested to describe the nature of lived experience as felt through the passions and affections; cultivating how one affectively relates to one's surroundings is the philosopher's fundamental concern. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, Hartley's theory of association informs his belief that we have the power to refine our passions and therefore the ability to structure our bodily and mental experience.

The affective nature of Hartley's theory of mechanism is pronounced in the Preface to *Observations* when Hartley cites the work of Reverend John Gay as his inspiration: 'About eighteen years ago I was informed that the Rev. Mr. GAY, then living, asserted the possibility of deducing all our intellectual pleasures and pains from association. This put me upon considering the powers from association' (Hartley I:iii). Gay had written an essay entitled *Preliminary Dissertation Concerning the Fundamental Principle of Virtue or Morality*<sup>1</sup> where, using John Locke's theory of association, he had opposed the idea of an innate moral sense or public affections (forwarded by Francis Hutcheson), to instead suggest that the affections and passions could be understood through association.<sup>2</sup> Gay writes:

The Case is really this. We first perceive or imagine some real Good, i.e. fitness to promote our happiness, in those things which we love and approve of. Hence [...] we annex pleasure to those things. Hence those things and Pleasure are so tied together and associated in our Minds, that one cannot present itself but the other will occur. (I:xxxix)

This view of pleasure, which relies on the doctrine of association, encouraged Hartley to explore the connection between pleasure and virtue further to determine its consequence for spirituality and morality.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, this was also a promise to illuminate the physical causes of morality and faith since, according to the theory, both are based on corporeal passions and affections. First we should recall that for Hartley, the passions and affections are 'spiritual' because represented as ideas in the mind. He says:

Some degree of spirituality is the necessary consequence of passing through life. The sensible pleasures and pains must be transferred by association more and more every day, upon things that afford neither sensible pleasure nor sensible pain in themselves, and so beget the intellectual pleasure and pains. (I:82)

However, as well as being the spiritual result of association, passions and affections are also physical, because subject to impressions on the body and internal vibrations. This twofold nature is vital for the philosopher as it allows each person the potential, and duty, to enable their moral and religious growth. The most important emotion in this regard is benevolent love because this reflects God's own nature. As such, appropriating God's divinity is a matter of scientific control of the body, rather than something enigmatic and transcendent.

Refining the emotions is difficult because of the sorrow introduced at the Fall that necessitates the person take part in associating pleasure and virtue. The philosopher accepts that 'from the very frame of our natures [...] we are not qualified for any great degree of happiness here' (II.345). Carl Jung's comment that 'The biblical fall of man presents the dawn of consciousness as a curse' (99) relates to Hartley's understanding that our feelings of pain are solely its consequence when an older and narrower emotional value-system (which only comprised of goodness and happiness) was completely shattered: 'After the fall we may suppose Adam and Eve extended their language to new objects and ideas, and especially those which were attended with pain' (I.298). However, the 'doctrine of universal happiness to all' on which *Observations* is founded, allows the search and expectation of happiness to be the compass directing each person; true belief in impending happiness will inevitably dictate our emotional and religious worldview:

How happy in himself, how benevolent to others, and how thankful to God, ought that man to be, who believes both himself and others born to an infinite expectation! Since God has bid us rejoice, what can make us sorrowful? Since he has created us for happiness, what misery can we fear? [...] Nay, could any of us fully conceive, and be duly influenced by, this glorious expectation, this infinite balance in our favour, it would be sufficient to deprive all present evils of their sting and bitterness. (II: 438)

This passage appears towards the end of *Observations* and gives us insight into the culmination of the work, which aims to prove the happiness we should feel when religious truth has been physically proved. As this chapter will explain, the affections and passions provide for Hartley, a specific bridge between the prelapsarian state of ‘innocence, and pure unmixed happiness’ (I: 298) and our anticipated future contentment. They do this by enabling spiritual growth and restoration, and offering a pathway to divinity. I argue that this religious and vital valuation of the passions in *Observations* has been overlooked by scholars, who do not read the text in a religiously-sensitive manner.

Relatedly, recent critics concentrate less on the text’s specific belief that Mankind must work to become like God emotionally. While God is benevolent, merciful and fatherly, for Hartley (following John Gay), God must also be happy: ‘infinite benevolence [...] always appears to us under the idea of perfection and happiness [...] since the wishing good to others, and the endeavouring to procure it for them, is, in us, generally attended with a pleasurable state of mind, we cannot but apply this observation to the divine nature’ (II.20). Attaining and exuding happiness is fundamental in the quest for divinity, and the philosopher



argues that the scriptures have the particular purpose of enabling this emotional shift: ‘The design is that of bringing all mankind to an exalted, pure, and spiritual happiness, by teaching, enforcing, and begetting in them love and obedience to God’ (II: 127). *Observations* is a rewriting of the gospel message, made sympathetic to the intellectual concerns and interests of an eighteenth-century audience. Hartley’s biblically-informed and eternal perspective means that his text is more than just a quest for pain’s reduction in a fallen world; rather it looks towards the natural flourishing and happiness of both body and mind. Robert Marsh recognizes that Hartley has both religious and scientific ambitions in his search to restore mankind:

He is attempting [...] to understand this creature, known *a priori* to be fallen, whose mind operates mechanically by association of simple sensations (and perhaps has material particles vibrating in its medullary substance), in order better to ascertain how its natural *behavior* [sic] can be regulated according to the rules of *conduct* revealed by God. (268)

Hartley is most interested to re-shape the affections and passions; regardless of gender, class, race, or education, any person can become like God and be happy through training the affectionate mechanism of the body.

## Scholarly Interest in Hartley after Coleridge

Scholars have often focused on Hartley's physicalized account of associationism and the mechanical approach to man at the expense of the text's important emotional theory. As such, the text's purpose of enabling each person's happiness is neglected in favour of more generalized theoretical discussions regarding Hartley's place in philosophy and science. Hartley is absent from what Thomas Dixon has called, 'The predominant scholarly attitude towards the emotions in recent decades [...] of loving restoration' (9). He does not appear in recent critical studies of emotion,<sup>4</sup> notably excluded from *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (2010), an extensive collection of essays that covers the history of emotion, the self, practical reason, and morality.

I suggest that both Joseph Priestley and Samuel Taylor Coleridge have contributed to Hartley's positioning outside of an emotional context. As renowned intellectuals, still highly valued for their scientific and literary innovations, their engagement with Hartley has inevitably influenced his reception amongst more recent readers. Priestley has been named Hartley's 'bulldog' by Richard Allen (11), drawing attention to the man's great admiration, and the close intellectual relationship he forged after the philosopher's death. As noted in the previous chapter, Priestley's shorter version of *Observation on Man*, newly named *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* (1775), foregrounded associationism whilst removing all Hartley's discussion of moral and religious topics (as well as his theory of vibrations and some detail of anatomy) from the text. Priestley stated that Hartley's theory of the human mind was 'clogged with a whole system of moral and religious knowledge [...] which [...] is, in a great measure, foreign to it' and as such 'these obstacles it is my object in this

publication to remove' (Priestley qtd Hartley *Theory of Mind* iii). Being most absorbed by the materialist implications of the text, Priestley ensured that his conclusion to *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* would focus on Hartley's mechanism and the implications of the doctrine of necessity. Priestley also advocated the text's use in the dissenting academies, which positioned it within a context famous for encouraging alternative ideas. Furthermore, this general link between Hartley and the Unitarian movement inevitably situates Hartley apart from scholarly discussion of emotion, and within a more specifically rational approach to faith. Anna Barbauld's alleged description of Unitarianism as 'Christianity in the frigid zone' (McCarthy 153), testifies to its image as a faith more interested in doctrine than the emotional engagement with God that she favoured.

Unlike Priestley, Coleridge is now primarily remembered for being an opponent of Hartlean philosophy. He was initially fixated with Hartley's work, even naming his son David Hartley in 1796 and having his portrait painted holding a copy of *Observations*. However, he later cited Hartley's understanding of association as leading him to disclaim the philosophy entirely, and throughout his career, he maintained an ambivalent relationship towards materialism and the concept of the embodied mind. In 1801, he wrote to Thomas Poole: 'I have [...] completely overthrown the doctrine of Association, as taught by Hartley, and with it all the irreligious metaphysics of modern Infidels – especially the doctrine of Necessity' (Wheeler 13). Coleridge's preliminary support redeveloped into a stark rebuff for what he regarded as Hartley's 'reduction' of mental events to the physiology of sense perception, and Hartley's seeming derogation of the mind (and thus the soul) to habit (Faflak 57). He referred to the 'nonsense of the vibrations' and satirized the concept of 'thinking corporealities' (Coleridge qtd Leadbetter 41). It was his view that Hartley's materialism destroyed the worth given to the human being as autonomous and unique: such materialism

leaves the subject 'divided between the despotism of outward impressions, and that of senseless and passive memory' and reduces 'the will, the reason, the judgment, and the understanding' to the 'mechanical *effects*' of the mind's association of ideas (Faflak 57). Hartlean philosophy is seen by Coleridge to destroy the agency associated with individual personality; in his view the logic of Hartley's ideas means that: 'We only *fancy*, that we act from rational resolves, or prudent motives, or from impulses of anger, love, or generosity. In all these cases the real agent [...] knows nothing of all that itself does' (Coleridge 429).

More specifically in terms of emotion, Coleridge sees that Hartley relegates the affections and passions to being the effects of various circumstances, thus rendering them artificial and weak semantic descriptions to explain something more complex and mysterious. He wrote particularly sensitively in a letter to Robert Southey (1803) about the affections: 'I hold, that association depends in a much greater degree on the recurrence of resembling states of Feeling, than on Trains of Idea[s] [...] Believe me [...] a metaphysical Solution, that does not immediately *tell* for something in the Heart, is grievously to be suspected as apocry[p]hal [...]' (Coleridge qtd Vallins 30). Referring to that which is counterfeit or mythical, the word 'apocryphal' here encapsulates Coleridge's determination to raise emotion and subjective states of feeling to having a key role in the discovery of truth, something he felt was clouded by the doctrine of association. David Vallins explains:

As Coleridge makes clear, what Hartley failed to recognize was 'The dependence of ideas [...] on states of bodily or mental *Feeling*' [...] So strong is the impulse to distinguish mental and physical, yet at the same time to regard thinking as an effect of the brain, that the real nature of our experience is lost in a morass of contradictions. (30)

This highlights the poet's call to a more phenomenological approach to experience, this being based on the assumption that Hartley is not attentive to the importance of subjective feelings.

K. M. Wheeler offers similar evaluation of Coleridge's opinions about this:

His philosophy had to be grounded in his feeling. It could not contradict the fundamental human feelings and experiences, otherwise he felt that philosophy must be false, or at least an inadequate account. Thus the unity of thought and feeling became the cornerstone of his own philosophical commitment. (11)

Coleridge ultimately reacted against his particular view of Hartleanism by replacing empiricist philosophy and the natural sciences with a turn to German idealism; also to Brunonian science, which, alongside its interest in 'excitability' and materialism, was popular in Germany for enabling the elucidation of a transcendental idealist philosophy of science (Vickers 55).<sup>5</sup> Coleridge wanted to support a system that esteemed feeling as equally important to physical processes, and as Neil Vickers has shown, in his own life he was committed to discovering how his mind influenced or was affected by his bad health and to 'discovering his own unconscious thoughts and emotions' (74). If he had read Hartley's text outside of Priestley's influence or without his own fascination for the theory of association, he might have discovered a very different philosophy that was similar to his own interests.

Coleridge's interest to engage with a more nuanced approach to thought and emotion, one that upheld the distinct powers of the mind, is shown in 1796 when he set apart Dr

Beddoes from other physicians (who were called by him, ‘*shallow* animals who imagine that in the whole system of things there exists nothing but Gut and Body’) (Vickers 68).<sup>6</sup> Coleridge was attracted to Beddoes’ belief that intellectual emotional states could be cures for illness: he wrote to the father of his friend and sometime lodger, Charles Lloyd, in 1796, that ‘I chose Dr Beddoes, because he is a *philosopher* [...] he *told* me, that your Son’s cure must be effected by Sympathy and Calmness’ (Vickers 68). As will be seen later in this chapter, the view that acknowledges the power of the mind to heal is also particularly Hartlean. However, despite this, we can see that for Coleridge, Hartley is outside of the new approach to vitality, body and mind that Beddoes, Schelling, and Kant pursued especially owing to his idea of the mechanical mind. Where Beddoes and Hartley differ, may also be in their degrees of radicalism. Beddoes supported the medical system of John Brown, both reading it in a materialist sense, but at the same time, encouraging the development of a Kantian appropriation of Brown’s theories.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Hartley who was suspicious of the polite arts, Beddoes saw that rejecting the anti-materialist potential of Brown would be limiting and he had hopes for how a creative writer could develop his theories in ways he could not conceive, particularly with regard to psychological illness (Vickers 41).

Coleridge’s criticisms of Hartley’s philosophy (particularly his belief that Hartley failed to recognize the importance of ‘bodily or mental *Feeling*’) reveals perhaps the on-going legacy of Priestley’s influence. Vallins locates Coleridge’s need for a more mystical understanding of thought, which he sees in contrast to Hartley’s own work. He explains:

In highlighting the ambiguous relationship between thought and emotion, and the frequent difficulty of distinguishing between them, therefore, Coleridge would have passed beyond the

naïve Hartleian [sic] conception of thought as a consequence of external impressions moving through the body in successive sequences of vibrations. (29-30)

Like Wheeler, Vallins emphasizes the discordance between Coleridge and Hartley, allowing the philosopher to be positioned as an associationist theorist rather than as a moralist or theologian in any way. Despite reading the 1791 full version of Hartley, including the notes and additions, we can see that, overall, Coleridge remained sceptical about *Observations* spiritual and emotional potential, which he discredited openly. Even in 1817, he complained that the theological doctrines of Part Two were unrelated, and unrelatable, to the ‘peculiar system’ of Part One (Marsh 264). This dichotomy created between Hartley and Coleridge overlooks Hartley’s own attention to the power of feelings, as well as his interest to make them central to mankind’s ethical relationship with the world.

In recent decades, Hartley’s innovation in grounding the theory of association in physiology (in the Newtonian-inspired theory of bodily vibrations) still causes him to be most remembered. Wheeler’s reflection on the overall impact of *Observations on Man* testifies to this: she refers to ‘the determinism and mechanistic theory of a passive mind inherent in Hartley’s Associationism’ (4) and writes of the ‘Lockean-Hartleian [sic] passive theory’ (5). Similarly, in James A. Harris’s, *Of Liberty and Necessity*, *Observations* is foregrounded specifically because of the implications for free-will that the mechanistic theory of the mind suggests; referring to ‘The version of Lockean empiricism developed by David Hartley’, Harris writes: ‘At the heart of this alternative version of the experimental approach to moral subjects was the association of ideas, and the claim that the role played by association in the workings of the mind is much more extensive than had hitherto been acknowledged’ (155).

Arthur Lovejoy has remarked on the unhelpful way in which Hartley is dismissed with terms such as ‘sensationalist’, ‘empiricist’, ‘dualist’, ‘mechanist’, ‘near-materialist’, ‘determinist’, ‘associationist’, ‘necessitarian’, ‘utilitarian’, ‘Christian optimist’, and ‘mystic’, all of which, he feels, ‘are usually thought-obscuring terms, which one sometimes wishes to see expunged from the vocabulary of the philosopher and the historian altogether’ (Lovejoy 6). In *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (2005) and *The Oxford Companion to the Mind* (2004), Hartley is still recorded in terms of his interest in the body’s role in the production of association (and for his detailed analysis of sensations and vibrations).

In the same way, Hartley is often placed with Locke, and ‘against’ Wordsworth, because of his apparently passive theory of mind. Alan Richardson, in *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001), uses this dichotomy in his work, stating that Herder and Wordsworth depict:

[A] process of cognitive unfolding that confounds distinctions between reason and emotion and that places the infant in a world of passionate social interaction from the moment of birth. This new approach to psychological development is a remarkable departure from the more passive, mechanistic accounts of Locke, Hartley, and Condillac; it looks as much forward to recent cognitive neuroscience as backward to analytic philosophy. (Richardson 67)

While Wordsworth himself has been called the ‘associationist poet’ and indebted to ‘Hartleyan [sic] psychology’, he is nonetheless, characterized as breaking away from him, mainly because of Hartley’s perceived de-emotionalized methodology (Richardson *Science of Mind* 68-73). However, it is possible to see Hartley as Pre-Romantic considering his appeal



and commonality to much Romantic thought. A shift in the way Hartley is perceived towards this end is noticeable. In *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (2004), Simon Blackburn offers a more balanced account of *Observations on Man* that focuses on its interest in ethics and benevolence. Although first recording that Hartley is ‘best remembered for being the founder of associationist psychology’, Blackburn expands on this to describe *Observations* as a ‘naturalistic attempt to provide an integrated theory of human nature’. This is because ‘Hartley believed that the task of education was to bring about an association of private pleasure with the exercise of public benevolence and virtue. In the well-adjusted person there is a “ladder of pleasures” with those of benevolence towards the top’. Furthermore, and very important for our discussion of emotion and happiness, Blackburn adds that Hartley is remembered for influencing the later generation of Utilitarians, particularly James Mill.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, Dinah Birch recognized the equal significance of Hartley’s entrance into faith and ethics, choosing one quotation from the text about the evolution of pleasures that makes ‘the pure love of God, as our highest and ultimate perfection.’

The current chapter aims to show the centrality of the affections and passions in Hartley’s thought, and how they create a pathway to fulfilment and to God. In order to challenge the dichotomy between Hartley and Romanticism/feeling, the next section will provide an analysis of Hartley’s emotional terminology and elucidate his interest to create his own specific discourse of the affections and passions. The remainder of chapter is then divided into two main parts. Part One is more descriptive and comprises of four sections: ‘Introduction to the Passions and Affections’, ‘The Causes of the Affections and Passions’, ‘Hartley’s Vibrations’ and ‘History of the Body’. Part Two offers a reading of Hartley’s philosophy, drawing attention to the spiritual goals of his project and his view of human life.

This comprises of three sections: ‘Emotions Outside the Body’, ‘How to Control the Affections’ and ‘Self-Annihilation and Perfection’.

## **Part One**

### **Introduction to the Passions and Affections**

Hartley refers mostly to the ‘affections’ and ‘passions’ in his thesis, which, as Dixon notes in his book *From Passions to Emotions* (2003), were ‘the predominant terms in the period for describing states such as love, fear, joy and sorrow’ (62).<sup>9</sup> The term ‘emotion’ was not in common usage until the 1850s (Dixon 63).<sup>10</sup> Hartley’s own understanding of passions and affections concentrate on their mental, internal nature, since they exist within the mind. However, the bodily associations subsumed historically in the word ‘passion’ are important to consider. Hartley’s project is committed to establishing how both the affections and the passions are dependent on the physical body (and directly correlated to different bodily states); as Peter Goldie comments in relation to this, emotions are ‘represented on both sides of the mind-body divide - both paradigmatically mental, and paradigmatically bodily’ (Goldie 1). In a text that aims to make ‘observations on the frame of the human body and mind and on their mutual connexions and influences’ (I:i), the affections and passions are an important means for Hartley to display the reciprocity between body and mind more deeply. By defining this relationship Hartley does not hope to advance knowledge about anatomy or

psychology, but rather to discover more about morality, faith and happiness. Hartley alludes to the purposes of his analysis in this respect:

It is of utmost consequence to morality and religion, that the affections and passions should be analysed into their simple compounding parts, by reversing the steps of associations which concur to form them. For thus we may learn how to cherish and improve good ones, check and root out such as are mischievous and immoral, and how to suit our manner of life, in some tolerable measure, to our intellectual and religious wants. (I.81)

That the human being's mind 'operates mechanically by association of simple sensations (and perhaps has material particles vibrating in its medullary substance)' is irrespective of Hartley's larger religious project (Marsh 268), and he seeks to define how the body itself reveals the religious and moral truth.

When Hartley discusses the passions, he does so under the inclusive categories, 'pleasures' and 'pains': 'all the passions arise thus from pleasure and pain' (I.369), 'all passions are states of considerable pleasure and pain' (I.368), 'all mere sensations were in their original state, either pleasures or pains' (I.41); in the Introduction to *Observations* (which establishes terminology and basic concepts) Hartley immediately begins by situating the various pleasures and pains under seven different aspects of human experience, what he refers to as the 'seven general classes'. Each of the pleasures and pains in these classes is discussed separately during the two volumes, describing why the various emotions manifest, and how they are applied.

Before these discussions however, Hartley impresses on the reader that all pleasures and pains are ‘comprehended under the sensations and ideas’ (I.ii). This is an important qualification, since ideas and sensations are ‘internal feelings’, although made up solely of physical experiences mediated through the body: ‘*Sensations* are those internal feelings of the mind which arise from the impressions made by external objects upon the several parts of our bodies. All other internal feelings may be called *ideas*’ (I.ii). Unlike Antonio Damasio, who distinguishes between ‘feeling’ and ‘emotion’ to suggest ‘feeling should be reserved for the private, mental experience of an emotion, while the term emotion should be used to designate the collection of responses, many of which are publicly observable’ (*What Happens* 42), for Hartley, all passions and affections are internal. The difference between these cognitive states, ‘sensations’ and ‘ideas’, depends entirely on his theory of association and his understanding of the mind. As he reminds his readers, some writers class sensations under ideas not attending to a distinction (I.ii). Hartley only allows that, ‘Ideas of sensation’ are ‘simple’ (since these are registers in the mind of what has directly happened to the body), while all other ideas are ‘complex’ or ‘intellectual’ (I.ii) (because they are made up of these simple ideas). Therefore, the pleasures and pains of sensation are sense-based and ‘simple’, while the remaining pleasures and pains under these seven general classes are ‘intellectual’ (but still, solely from the sensible pleasures and pains). He impresses this point particularly succinctly in his section ‘Of the Affections’”

Since therefore the passions are states of considerable pleasure and pain, they must be aggregates of the ideas, or traces of the sensible pleasures and pains, which ideas make up by their number, and mutual influence upon one another, for the faintness and transitory nature of each singly taken. (I.368)

He clarifies this later, reiterating that intellectual pleasures and pains do not pre-exist their constituent sensible pleasures and pains:

Now it will be a sufficient proof, that all the intellectual pleasures and pains are deducible ultimately from the sensible ones [...] For thus none of the intellectual pleasures and pains can be original. But the sensible pleasures and pains are evidently originals. They are therefore the only ones, i.e. they are the common source from whence all the intellectual pleasures and pains are ultimately derived. (I.416-417)

However, whilst the intellectual pleasures and pains are ‘second-hand’, they are no less authentic or powerful than the sensible pleasures and pains: ‘The intellectual pleasures and pains are as real as the sensible ones, being, as we have seen, nothing but the sensible ones variously mixed and compounded together’ (I.83). There is not an intrinsic hierarchy between the passions associated more directly with the body, and those associated with the mind since, as will be seen, hierarchy of passions and affections is based on a particular, religiously-interested framework. Yet it is worth considering that this points to Hartley’s more general acceptance and interest to promote of body-mind equality.

Related to this, is the way in which Hartley’s philosophy disregards the estimation of ‘reason’ above ‘passion’ to in fact submerge them, making these bodily-dependent passions, intellectual when manifested in their highest form. Although ‘The *affections* have the pleasures and pains for their objects; as the *understanding* has the mere sensation and ideas’

(I.iii), there are direct similarities between these usually contrasted concepts. Hartley remarks on ‘the many analogies and connections between the understanding and affections as these terms are commonly understood and contradistinguished by writers’ (I.343-344), arguing, ‘the association precedes [sic] in the same manner in the generation of the affections’, that these are ‘not really distinct things, but only different names, which we give to the same kind of motions in the nervous system’ (I.344). This bodily understanding surrounding the production of emotion and knowledge means that ‘now it may be shewed, that association must prevail in each motion in the brain’ (I.344). When Hartley categorizes the passions alongside other operations of the mind, he demonstrates how a systematic, physiologically-based approach to describing man’s frame allows for operations of body and mind to be equated. This is especially significant where feeling is concerned. Hartley writes, ‘the nature of the affections and will, in the same manner, and from the same principles [...] Of ideas, intellect, memory, and fancy [...] are all deducible from the external impressions made upon the senses’ (I.81). Thus passion is shown to come into every aspect of cognition: ‘all our pleasures and pains are internal feelings, and, conversely, all our internal feelings seem to be attended with some degree either of *pleasure* or *pain*’ (I.ii).

For Hartley, the affections are the drives we have for accessing pleasurable internal feelings: ‘The *affections* have the pleasures and pains for their objects [...] By the affections we are excited to pursue happiness, and all its means, fly from misery, and all its apparent causes’ (I.iii). The will then, is solely made up of the affections. Although it is ‘that state of mind which is immediately previous to, and causes, those express acts of memory, fancy, and bodily motion, which are termed voluntary’ (I.iii), its underlying emotional, rather than rational, motivations for such actions are defined by Hartley: ‘The will appears to be nothing but a desire or aversion sufficiently strong to produce an action [...] that desire or aversion,

which is strongest for the then present time' (I.371). Hartley's contentious conclusion to this expresses that the will has no real agency since, like the affections, it is created inadvertently: 'Since therefore all love and hatred, all desire and aversion, are factitious, and generated by association, i.e. mechanically; it follows that the will is mechanical also' (I.371); yet this does not undercut the importance or authenticity of feelings; subjective emotional states are fundamental for actions to take place in Hartley's view, and vice versa. As Robert Solomon asserts, 'If no actual or possible states of affairs were ever judged by us to be preferable to any other, we would have no grounds for actions [...] The passionate life, not the dispassionate life of pure reason, is the meaningful life' (ix). This reflects Hartley's understanding that disallows the derogation of feeling; as will be discussed, for Hartley, feelings are the means by which a person can identify his or her spiritual growth, and exert agency.

The knowledge that the will is inadvertently created allows the person greater agency, since, after evaluation, it can be re-moulded and reformed, allowing him or her the opportunity of choosing a particular identity. While it is true that 'the associationist psychology of Locke, especially as developed by Hartley, did much to establish the importance of childhood experience' (Richardson 12), the person's capacity to invent themselves only becomes equally, if not more, powerful when he or she is aware of the effects of physicalized associationism. Rosfort and Stanghellini's work is interesting in elucidating Hartley's thinking here, as they draw attention to the choice we have when we relate to our emotions: 'although our self is deeply affective at its core, and our affectivity is that on and from which we think and act, we still are not our emotions' (*Being a Person* 284). This is because, it is more important that 'We relate ourselves to the emotions that spring from our affective core, just as we relate ourselves to what we are, that is, our social position

and background, physical constitution, behaviour towards others, self-esteem, and so on' (*Being a Person* 284)). Namely, 'In our reflective self-evaluation, we distance ourselves from our immediate desires and inclinations, and might perhaps choose something even contrary to those [...] Thereby, we create a second order desire that is completely personal and may even appear idiotic in the eyes of other people' (*Between Moods* 254). Our ability to choose the people we become is central in Hartley, and our subsequent actions to effect or refuse change, reveal to us who we are. Even if our body and other physical circumstances impact on the number and extent of the possibilities open to us at first, each person still has the opportunity to adapt and reach loving perfection. For Hartley choice and subsequent action is the way to become divine. However, the natural working of the body mean that God's perfect, benevolent and happy nature will be acquired during the individual's eternal life.

### **The Causes of the Affections and Passions**

Despite Hartley's mind-based descriptions of the affections and passions, he is clear that both bodily and mental states can cause them; this is because the mind can effect bodily changes, allowing the body a special role in their expression. Thus, melancholy can be rooted in 'self-indulgence in eating and drinking, and particularly in fermented liquors, want of bodily labour, injuries done to the brain by fevers, concussions, &c', as well as 'too much application of the mind, especially to the same object and ideas' (I.399); furthermore, 'a pleasurable or painful state of the stomach or brain, joy or grief, will make all thoughts warp their own way, little or much' (I.383-384). Hartley observes that 'All strong emotions of mind ought also to increase the heat of the body' (I.125) and 'All passions of the mind



increase the motion of the heart [...] but melancholy, when it makes men inactive [...] has a contrary effect' (I.246). Hartley draws attention to the body and mind reciprocity, when he explains how the mind comes to develop. He uses the example of eating for this purpose:

Now, at first indeed, the child is mere body, as it were; and therefore it is not at all incongruous to suppose, that he may be directed by mere bodily appetites and instincts. But, when the mental faculties are generated, he then becomes a compound of body and mind; and consequently it would be incongruous to suppose him directed in any thing that affects both body and mind, as diet plainly does, by mere bodily appetites. (II.225-226)

Hartley continues here, emphasising the importance that attending to the equal power of the mind and body has for happiness and well-being:

On the contrary, his rule ought now to be a compound of bodily and mental instincts, inclinations, admonitions, &c. directing, influencing, and assisting one another. Let this be so, and the child or man will very seldom deviate from what is most conducive to health and happiness of all kinds. And it is to be observed, that the bodily pains and sufferings, which follow from yielding to mere bodily appetites, in opposition to mental conviction, are one principal means, by which the authority and influence of conscience are established with respect to other branches of desire. (II.226)

Despite the implications involved in the word ‘yielding’ and the reference to ‘mere bodily appetites’, there is no sense of an inherent distrust associated with the body per se. The mind is equally powerful and able to be dominant as it registers and similarly connects mental feelings with their physical counterparts. He explains this in his chapter on ‘Of The Desires of the Sexes Towards Each Other’:

As the desires and pleasures of this kind are thus increased by associated influences from other parts of our natures, so they are reflected back by innumerable associated methods, direct and indirect, upon the various incident and events of life, so as to affect in secondary ways even those who have never experienced the gross corporeal gratification. (I.241-242)

Furthermore:

When impure Desires are allowed, indulged, and heightened voluntarily, it is evident from the Doctrine of Association, that they will draw to themselves all the other Pleasures or our Nature, and even, by adhering to many neutral Circumstances, convert them into Incentives and Temptations. So that all the Desires, Designs, and Ideas of such Persons are tainted with Lust. (I: 241)<sup>11</sup>

Hartley observes that the ‘compound’ of bodily and mental instincts is always ‘directing, influencing, and assisting one another’, highlighting that body and mind are in continual dialogue.

There is nothing inherently dangerous about bodily or mental pleasures themselves, it is only when this dialogue remains unrealized that the person is not fulfilling his or her potential. Furthermore, it is Hartley's concern that pleasure should not become the final end, which would increase the potential for the secularization of pleasurable passions, which, as will be seen, in Hartley's view is wholly counter to their divine function. Hartley's belief that both body and mind are equally vital for optimum health was common in eighteenth-century medicine; it was accepted that bodily and mental exhaustion could be caused by too much thinking as well as too much feeling (Vickers 71) and the resurgence of interest in the body-mind relationship surrounded the issue of what caused physiological events. There were those who wanted to place mind in body by explaining psychological causes through physiological events, and those who set the mind as superior to the body, as Vickers puts it, 'controlling it by means of activities which, if they were not unwitnessable, certainly went unwitnessed' (67). Vickers clarifies the importance of this debate about the role of the mind, which overlapped 'but is nevertheless distinct from, the argument over materialism' (67). He writes: 'The fundamental point at issue was whether there was something in the nature of *mental content as mental content, irrespective of its physiological basis*, that was capable of directing the body at a deep level, in ways that exceeded the bounds of ordinary intentionality' (67-68).

While, as has been stated, Hartley expressed that the mind can cause vibrations in the body (and therefore dictate action or passion) he is also dedicated to showing how the passions (internal, simple and complex ideas) are dependent on the body. Here he shows his participation in the latest medical research. Julien Offray de La Mettrie, a 'hard' materialist, in the early 1740s discredited the soul as having control of the body, but saw mental experience as the result of organic changes in the brain and nervous system (Vickers 66-68).

While being less extreme than La Mettrie, Hartley had observed the body's power: he writes, 'our hopes and fears rise and fall with certain bodily dispositions, according as these favour or oppose them' (II:373), 'A disposition to a pleasurable state is a general attendant upon health, and the integrity of our bodily faculties' (I:423). He is specific, even identifying the most vital organs and workings of the body for their roles in human emotional life; the brain, stomach, heart, uterus, and nervous system are noted for their power of exciting the temper and causing melancholy, irritability, or strong passions within the mind. Notwithstanding the brain where, for example, the emotions of joy, sorrow, fear and melancholy can be produced (since 'according to this theory, all arise from and are attended by corresponding vibrations in the white medullary substance of the brain') (I.135), the sense of taste for pleasure (I.166), the sense of feeling in pain, the ends of the fingers (described as 'extreme parts') (I.116), as well as 'the lips, nipples, and external parts of generation' (which 'have a more exquisite sensibility, than other external parts') (I.117), are identified as particularly important for a more intense emotional experience, making them special "gateways" for affective experience. The body is that which enables pleasure, although Hartley observes that it gradually loses its power of doing this with old age (II.240).

### **Hartley's Vibrations**

The power of the body and mind to equally impact on affections and passions is based in the vibrations, which transmit pleasure and pains and are infectious in the body. Vibrations enable the body to make associations but they also necessitate that physical memories are

stored in the body. First, to highlight the ‘infectious’ power of vibrations, Hartley uses the example of ‘the Desires of the Sexes towards each other’:

if anatomists and physicians will compare the circumstances of the sensations and motions of these organs with the general theory delivered in the first chapter, they may see general evidences for sensory vibrations, for their running along membranes, and affecting the neighbouring muscles in a particular manner. (I.242)

It is Hartley’s view that vibrations inevitably transmit to other parts of the body through ‘sympathetic influences by means of nervous communication’ (I.164); these physical responses then reinforce the subsequent connections in the mind. Thus ‘muscular contractions, which are nearly automatic at first, become afterwards subject to the influence of ideas’ (I.242); Hartley argues that since associated (mental) pleasures are continually remembering their past corresponding sensible (corporeal) pleasures, they are also always seeking the experience of their physical renewal. When Hartley discusses the pleasures of taste (the sense he regards as founding the social affections and pleasures), he draws attention to the impact of bodily memory, as well as the ‘intellectual’ desire for the repetition of physical feelings. It is this combination of the physical memory in the body, combined with the intellectual memory that recalls physical pleasures and pains, that together has so much power to influence our moral code:

A great part of our intellectual pleasures are ultimately deducible from those of taste back again, and so on without limits. And from this way of reasoning it may now appear, that a

great part of our intellectual pleasures are ultimately deducible from those of taste; and that one principal final cause of the greatness and constant recurrency of these pleasures, from our first infancy to the extremity of old age, is to introduce and keep up pleasurable states in the brain, and to connect them with foreign objects. (I:166)

In this description the brain is presented as a pleasure-motivated organ, which can be ‘dangerous’ because it is non-judgemental, only being interested in how it can re-experience feelings of pleasure.

Hartley’s theory of vibrations means that pleasure can be merely a result of the transmission of signals along a nerve in terms of ‘the subtle influences of the small parts of matter on each other’ (I:72). Allen explains further: ‘the theory is based upon a speculative Newtonian theory of matter and upon the chemical theory that Hartley’s colleague Stephen Hales derived from it. According to the theory, the fundamental properties of matter are forces of attraction and repulsion (Allen 7). Vibrations have traces, allowing the organs and nerves to have ‘memories’: ‘Sensory Vibrations, by being often repeated, beget, in the medullary Substance of the Brain, a Disposition to diminutive Vibrations, which may also be called Vibratiuncles and Miniatures, corresponding to themselves respectively’ (I:58). In other words, physical, though feebler, vibratory ‘traces’ (which are the physical memories of those original vibrations) continue movement in the medullary substance after impressions are made, according to the laws of motion. More than this, the body ‘remembers’ past pleasures and pains, since the doctrine of vibrations necessitates that each organ is changed physically through contact with the outside world: as all vibrations inevitably alter the

composition of the medullary substance and bodily parts (I.61), past feelings and experiences dictate that we inevitably reinterpret the world in association with the past.

The fact that the body's composition will naturally alter means that pains can become pleasures, and pleasures neutralized after repeated exposure:

It is not unsuitable to the doctrine of vibrations, that the frequent repetition of the same external impressions should have the power of converting original pains into pleasure, and pleasures into mere sensations, i.e. into evanescent pleasures; as we find it has in fact. For this may be effected by such a change in the organ and brain, as that the organ shall send weaker and weaker vibrations perpetually to the brain, upon every successive renewal of the same impressions, and the brain become perpetually less and less disposed to receive strong vibrations, though the power of communication from the impressions should continue the same. (I.38)

Hartley describes the impact of bodily harm on emotion: 'The nervous system is, through a bodily disorder, reduced to an aptness to receive uneasy and disgustful vibrations' (I:467). This allows the mind to start 'collecting and uniting every disagreeable idea and impression under the associations belonging to death; so that such persons live in perpetual anxiety and slavery' (I.467), 'Agreeably to this method of reasoning, it may be observed, that persons whose nerves are easily irritable, and those who have experienced great trials and afflictions, are, in general, more disposed to compassion than others' (I.475). This connection between the physical body and the mental passions seemed to solve the body-mind problem; since, as will be seen, Hartley then unites the emotions with faith. J.M Robertson has referred to

*Observations* as ‘Christian Materialism’ (I.198) which points towards this sense that religious truth seemed to be found in the body. As Richard Allen has explained, Hartley wanted to find a ‘history of human beings’ where ‘God’s action is not to be imagined as something that imposes itself on human life from the outside [...] rather, it is waiting to be discovered naturally at work within human experience, transforming consciousness (Allen 41).

### **History of the Body**

For Hartley, the brain controls our affective experience of the world, presiding as it does over the entire body: ‘the brain has as great a share in all the natural functions of the parts, and its disorders, in all their disorders, as the heart and its disorders can have; and much more than any other part besides the heart’ (I.265). Furthermore, ‘it must have a most intimate connection with the theory of nervous distempers, and some with that of others, on account of the just mentioned dependence of all the parts on the brain’ (I:265). Interest in the brain and nerves was provoked as a result of Thomas Willis, who in the 1660s, revolutionized thinking about the body, limiting the soul to the brain (which he hypothesized to control the entire body) and claiming the nerves alone to be responsible for sensory impressions and knowledge (Rousseau 169). George Rousseau reminds us that: ‘The theory itself was of course unprecedented’ (166) and that ‘If Willis had not appeared on the scientific scene with his striking theory about the autonomous brain, the nerves could never have had the dominant sway that they did. For by the 1660s anatomy was sufficiently well developed as a subject for serious study’ (168). As the first scientist to actually limit the soul to the brain, Willis ‘inspired a revolution in intellectual thought concerning the nature of man’ (166), the legacy



of which is clear in Hartley's own innovations; although it was generally accepted that the brain controlled the nerves, Willis' elevation of the brain to a role long-associated with the soul necessitated a growth in nerve research. Rousseau summarizes:

[N]erves, and their subsidiaries – fibres and animal spirits – could not be accounted for as the basis of knowledge, and consequently of human behaviour, until the seat of the soul was limited (not moved) to the brain. For this organ alone, the brain, depends upon the nerves for all its functions. Once the soul was limited to the brain, scientists could debate precisely how the nerves carry out its voluntary and involuntary intentions. And the history of sciences reveals that they did this: no topic in physiology between the Restoration and the turn of the nineteenth century was more important than the precise workings of the nerves, their intricate morphology and historical arrangement, their anatomic function. (166)

Hartley reflects on the brain's dominance to impact on the entire physical, mental or emotional health of each person, controlling as it does, all operations of the body, and mediating the external world to the person:

It is evident, that all the vibrations which belong to ideas, and intellectual affections, must reside in the brain, or even in the most internal parts of it, not in the spinal marrow, or nerves. The brain is therefore the seat of the rational soul, i.e. of the soul, as far as it is influenced by reasons and moral motives [...] the spinal marrow and nerves, in part, the sensorium, or the seat of the sensitive soul. (I.81)

The fact that the passions and affections are ideas that exist only in the brain (where the brain is the 'seat of the rational soul') enables this organ to be spiritualized, even if Hartley is unclear about the nature of this spirituality. Hartley seeks to retain the religious notion of the soul in his discussions of the human body in order to locate exactly how God and faith are inherently existent within each person. It is less important to him to define what the soul is than to explain the workings of the body and assume its relevance.

In order to achieve his union of brain and soul, the physical and mental are linked by Hartley through his doctrine of association and vibrations. Hartley explains this in the very first chapter of *Observations*: 'The doctrine of *vibrations* may appear at first sight to have no connection with that of *association*; however, if these doctrines be found in fact to contain the laws of the bodily and mental powers respectively, they must be related to each other, since the body and mind are' (I:6). He continues: 'One may expect, that *vibrations* should infer association as their effect, and *association* point to vibrations as its cause' (6). Thus the mental and the physical become intricately related and unable to exist alone. Hartley physicalizes the passions and affections through their actual location in the brain as vibrations, but he equally makes them immaterial because of their mental presence as ideas. As already seen, this has even deeper implications for Hartley, who writes about the mental as inevitably spiritual because of the theory of association (I:82). By extension, the process of association means that 'matter' could have a mental component: 'It does indeed follow from this Theory, that Matter, if it could be endued with the most simple Kinds of Sensation, might also arrive at all that Intelligence of which the human Mind is possessed' (I.511). He continues the discussion into an exposition of how his theory of mechanism might make some of the ideas or vocabulary to talk about spirituality redundant: 'Whence this Theory must be allowed to overturn all the Arguments which are usually brought for the

Immateriality of the Soul from the Subtlety of the internal Senses and of the rational Faculty’ (I:511).

This line of thinking about the physical and mental/spiritual as inter-related invites Hartley to spiritualize all matter and imagine that animals and vegetables may also have a spirituality and a place in the afterlife: ‘But if vegetables have sensation, which may indeed be a speculation very foreign to us, but is what we cannot disprove, then vegetables may be provided for in the same manner as animals’ [to experience life after death] (II.392). In terms of animals, he takes their suffering and spirituality seriously, situating them in the Fall,<sup>12</sup> and presenting them as deserving happiness in the next life:

It may be objected to some of the arguments here alleged for a future state, that they are applicable to brutes; and therefore that they prove too much [...] the future existence of brutes cannot be disproved by any arguments, as far as yet appears: let therefore those which favour it be allowed their due weight, and only that. (II.391)

The theory of association invites Hartley to suppose the remarkable similarity of humans and animals: ‘Brute creation appear by the foregoing history of association to differ from us in degree, rather than in kind’ (II.436). Therefore, there is no reason why they too, may not be part of an overarching religious plan:

And if there be any glimmering of the hope of an hereafter for them [the brutes], if they should prove to be our brethren and sisters in this higher sense, in immortality as well as

mortality, in the permanent principles of our minds, as well as the frail dust of our bodies, if they should be partakers of the same mystical body this would have a particular tendency to increase our tenderness for them. (II.223)

These remarks emblemize Hartley's notion of spirituality's quite ubiquitous nature, dependent as it is thought to be, on the senses, and the physical, external surroundings.

To recapture the shift in thinking that Hartley embraces here with regard to the emotions and spirit, it is worth remembering that affections and passions had long been attributed to a vague but reassuring idea of an 'active soul', or the humours. Galen's accounts of the animal economy<sup>13</sup> had not survived the scientific revolution. His concept of the immaterial spirits being inside the four humours was discredited after growing acceptance of William Harvey's (1578-1657) discovery of blood circulation and from Willis's research into the nerves. Willis had suggested that the veins and arteries were fundamental to the movement of the humours, making the brain and nerves responsible for health and disease. The growing interest in mechanistic physiology (most clearly identified with Descartes (1596-1650) and his *Les Passions de l'ame* (1649)) offered an interpretation of human sensations according to laws of matter and motion (Alberti 24). Fay Bound Alberti claims that:

In providing a way to think about emotions less in terms of humoral balance and more in accordance with the clockwork functioning of the body, mechanical philosophy popularized a language of ebb and flow in which new and modified versions of human psychology could flourish. (27)

Descartes' gesturing towards this physiological basis for the emotions (Alberti 24) reminds us of the impact that a developing medico-scientific landscape had for psychological and spiritual ideas surrounding the body.

Discussion over the nature of the body's energies, sensibility, and the soul reached its height in the eighteenth century (Vickers 24), particularly concerning the nature and power of the soul over the body, as seen in the famous debates between Scottish physician Robert Whytt (1714-66) and Swiss physician Albrecht von Haller (1708-77). While Haller believed that the soul should be confined to the brain, Whytt wanted to avoid what he saw as impious mechanism and affirmed that the soul must cause action in the body (27). It was his view that the power of sensibility could be related to other parts of the body not connected with the brain and nerves, but owing to a general sympathy being present in the body, related to an immaterial soul (26-27). The religious concerns that development in anatomy caused are not raised by Hartley, who refuses to prioritize body over soul or discuss the soul in depth. He only claims (as part of his chapter 'On the Mechanism of the Human Mind') that:

I would not therefore be any-way [sic] interpreted so as to oppose the Immateriality of the Soul. On the contrary, I see clearly, and acknowledge readily, that Matter and Motion, however subtly divided, or reason upon, yield nothing more than Matter and Motion still [...] But then neither would I affirm, that this Consideration affords Proof of the Soul's Immateriality. (I: 512)

Hartley is emphatic that the soul's potential for Immortality has 'little or no Connexion with its Immateriality' but is due only to God, 'Him who first breathed into Man the Breath of the present Life' (I: 512).

However, we should be clear that as part of Hartley's view that mind and body are equal and deeply connected, the soul becomes conflated with the brain. Although the philosopher says, 'I no-ways [sic] presume to determine whether Matter can be endued with Sensation or no' he continues 'It is sufficient for me, that there is a certain Connexion, of one Kind or other, between the Sensations of the Soul, and the Motions excited in the medullary Substance of the Brain; which is what all Physicians and Philosophers allow' (I: 512). He reminds us that 'I suppose, or postulate, in my first Proposition, that Sensations arise in the Soul from Motions excited in the medullary Substance of the Brain' (I: 511). This means that his entire theory surrounds the question of 'whether the Motions in the medullary Substance be the physical Cause of the Sensations' (I: 511). Hartley is careful to reassure readers that this is 'not supposing Matter to be endued with Sensation, or any way explaining what the Soul is, but only taking its Existence, and Connexion with the bodily Organs in the most simple Case, for granted' (I: 511). That the soul has such a strong connection to the body and matter re-imagines the way the body-mind debate is conceived.

At the same time, by making immortality and the soul separate concerns to the scientifically understood workings of the body, Hartley disallows the assumption that the person can be a victim to a more powerful body-mind conflict. He believes instead that increased understanding of each can extend the potential for agency, since the person is the reflection of his or her body and mind, and has choices: 'All the evidences for the mechanical nature of the body or mind are so many encouragements to study them faithfully and

diligently, since what is mechanical may both be understood and remedied' (I: 267).<sup>14</sup> This comment suggests that once the person understands himself or herself, he or she has the power to control the body and mind. What Hartley believes should be done with this power is central to *Observations*.

## **Part Two**

### **Emotion Outside the Body**

Hartley is specific that emotions do not pre-exist an encounter with the external world, but are created by it, being responsive to objects. Emotions are manifested due to association and therefore are mechanical. Hartley says that 'according to the opinion of mechanism [...] every action, or bodily motion, arises from previous circumstances, or bodily motions, already existing in the brain, i.e from vibrations, which are either the immediate effect of impression then made, or the remote compound effect of former impressions, or both' (501). Emotions are not representations of a pre-existent personality or emotional disposition, but are instead dependent on what the senses have captured and capture from the environment. Hartley emphasizes his distinctively mechanical view of emotional development by describing how a child comes to learn of pleasure and pain:

The young child learns to grasp, and go up to the plaything that pleases him, and to withdraw his hand from the fire that burns him, at first from the mechanism of his nature, and without any deliberate purpose of obtaining pleasure, and avoiding pain, or any less explicit reasoning about them. (I.369-370)

In radicalising usual understanding of the human's relationship to the affections, Hartley's theory gestures to how affections and passions can be said to exist as much within the object on which it is dependent, as within the person that perceives it; therefore any object, inanimate or living, can interact affectively with the subject, specifically because the affective relationship depends on associations. Initially, the process of responding and acting is not under the person's control but is instead 'dependent' on the object; desires always originate from a particular source, since logically, they have to manifest from somewhere. This means that our love or hatred is always first manifested from some particular object, and the memory of this first object remains: 'For it is very true, that, after general desires and endeavours are generated, they give rise in their turn to a variety of particular ones [...] But the original source is in the particular ones, and the general ones never alter and new-model the particular ones so much, as that there are not many traces and vestiges of their original mechanical nature and proportions remaining' (I.370).

Hartley reinforces the point that love and hatred are states dependent on (because only responsive to) objects: 'we may term all those affections of the pleasurable kind, which objects and incidents raise in us, love; all those of the painful kind, hatred. Thus we are said to love not only intelligent agents of morally good dispositions, but also sensual pleasures, riches, and honours; and to hate poverty, disgrace, and pain, bodily and mental' (I.369). Here



we see that the general feeling is depicted as the same, regardless of the object. The idea that emotion exists within the person, waiting to be projected on to the outside world is refuted since Hartley's theory of association depends upon the acceptance that personal identity and affections are the result of environmental factors: 'We each of us passions of all sorts, and lie open to influences of all sorts' (II.425) and 'The most general of our desires and aversions are factitious, i.e. generated by association' (I.370). This is why, 'the persons A and B, in whatever different proportions their intellectual affections now exist, may, by a suitable set of impressions, become hereafter alike' (II.425).

That each person only learns that happiness can be sought after it is physically experienced is important. Hartley writes that God has given people a mechanical nature so that they will naturally be inclined to seek what gives them pleasure after they feel it in the body:

By degrees he learns, partly from the recurrency of these mechanical tendencies, inspired by God, as one may say, by means of the nature which he has given us; and partly from the instruction and imitation of others; to pursue every thing which he loves and desires; fly from every thing which he hates; and to reason about the method of doing this, just as he does upon other matters. (I.370)

As this quote from *Observations* demonstrates, intellectual understanding about the significance of our choices comes later. Human beings physically and emotionally respond to the world first, before they understand what happiness is. This makes the desire for 'happiness' secondary and an almost accidental occurrence. In this way Hartley modifies the

Aristotelian concept of eudemonia. He says explicitly that ‘the desire of happiness seems in us to be the mere result of association [...] and association itself the general law, according to which the intellectual world is framed and conducted’ (II.21), and moreover that ‘happiness and the aversion to misery, are supposed to be inseparable from, and essential to, all intelligent natures. But this does not seem to be an exact or correct way of speaking’ (I.371). Although the sense of being ‘inspired by God’ suggests an innate drive, Hartley clearly refuses such a view in favour of the doctrine of association and the concept of the human as mechanical. He appeals to his readers to see the logic of his theory in relation to their experience:

And, whoever will be sufficiently attentive to the workings of his own mind, and the actions resulting therefrom, or to the actions of others, and the affections which may be supposed to occasion them, will find such differences and singularities in different persons, and in the same person at different times, as no way agree to the notion of an essential, original, perpetual desire of happiness, and endeavour to attain it but much rather than factitious associated desires and endeavours here asserted. (I.370)

Taking us back to the comment by Simone Weil which opened this chapter, such a view can be accused of disclaiming the sacred individuality of each person, and his or her unique affective engagement with the world; yet, this mechanical conception of the person is vital to Hartley’s work, since it is affectively-based and prioritizes the value of choice.

This knowledge is vital for the person who then has the opportunity to change what and who is loved by reflecting and selecting the objects and associations that are made. For example:

Gratification of the will without the consequent expected pleasure, and disappointments of it without the consequent expected pain, [...] by this, amongst other means [...] the human will is brought to a conformity with the divine; which is the only radical cure for all our evils and disappointment, and the only earnest and medium for obtaining lasting happiness. (I:372)

Hartley aims to emphasize that the human being is capable of controlling the experience of pleasure. This is very important since religion ‘requires’ that we ‘new-model our affections’ (II.55). He describes ‘Natural religion’ as ‘such a regulation of the affections and actions as the moral sense requires’ (II.45). More specifically, he writes about the duty we have to control where we find pleasure:

The theory here proposed for explaining the nature and growth of these desires shews in every step, how watchful every person, who desires true chastity and purity of heart, ought to be over his thoughts, his discourses, his studies, and his intercourses with the world in general, and with the other sex in particular. There is no security but in flight, in turning our mind from all associated circumstances [...] To which must be added great abstinence in diet, and bodily labour, if required. (I.242)

This argument for choice and the inductive nature of the emotions becomes more explicit when mankind's capacity to love God is discussed. For Hartley, that 'reverence towards God, and obedience to his will' is enjoined by 'the light of nature, or the consideration of the works of God' (II.45). He repeats this in more specific terms, stating:

The love of God, with its associates, gratitude, confidence and resignation, is generated by the contemplation of his bounty and benignity to us, and to all his creatures, as these appear from the view of the natural world, the declarations of scriptures, or a man's own observation and experience in respect of the events of life. (I:489)

He also promises:

when the love of God is made thus to arise from every object, and to exert itself in every action, it becomes of a permanent nature, suitable to our present frame; and will not pass into deadness and disgust, as our other pleasures do from repeated gratification. (II: 314)

More than this, because Hartley is secure in his belief that by uniting the human will with God's will, the person is 'rendered free from disappointments', he argues that 'we shall, by degrees, see every thing as God sees it, i.e. see every thing that he has made to be good, to be an object of pleasure' (II:312). By loving God he or she rises above painful emotions and transient worldly pleasures: 'when men have entered sufficiently into the ways of piety, God appears more and more to them in the whole course and tenor of their lives; and by uniting

himself with all their sensations, and intellectual perceptions, overpowers all the pains; augments and attracts to himself, all the pleasures (II.313). Accordingly, the process of love is reciprocal, with people loving God because of what they may observe in the world, and loving the world because of what they feel of God. Thus, we are also ‘led by the love of good men to that of God, and back again by the love of God to that of all his creatures’ (II.283). Feelings of pleasure (as opposed to intellectual understanding and knowledge) offer each person an experiential relationship with God in the world as the person learns to feel God in the pleasure around him or her:

And this argument will be much stronger, if we suppose (with reverence be it spoken!) any intimate union between God and his creatures; and that, as the happiness of the creatures arises from their love and worship of God, so the happiness of consists, shews itself, &c. (for one does not know how to express this properly in love and beneficence to the creatures. As God is present every where, knows and perceives every thing, he may also, in a way infinitely superior to our comprehension feel every where for all his creatures. Now, according to this, it would seem to us, that all must be brought to ultimate infinite happiness, which is, in his eye, present infinite happiness. (II.421)

The first line of this quote gestures to the sexual metaphor often made between God and human beings as lovers. That each person can have a physical as well as a spiritual relationship with God because of the passion and affections explains the ability each person has to experience God with the body. This more response-based approach to emotion (as opposed to an innate drive for happiness) also creates the opportunity for the individual to

notice his or her spiritual progression: the more pleasure in God that is felt, the more his or her emotions and heart is bending towards God and that which He adores.

### **How to Control the Affections**

Yet it is worth pausing to reconsider here, that the will (which causes all actions) is also an emotional force itself. This is important, since while it generally works by being motivated to receive the pleasures of gratification and avoid the pain of disappointment (I: 372), it is by no means an uncontrollable or impulsive entity to which each person must submit. Rather, the will is depicted as a malleable force because it is formed of affections; therefore, in actively choosing the objects and actions to associate with pleasure and pain, the individual can bend his or her will to God's will. This means that each person can demonstrate his or her love or obedience to God through the use of the passions, enabling him or her to use the will as a pathway to Him. The affections then, in an inverse manner, do remain in their traditional role as an index to each person's character; more specifically, they indicate his or her moral behaviour and loyalty to God, shaped as they are by conduct and choice. The well-known Christian teaching that the heart is of most importance to God,<sup>15</sup> resonates here and Hartley reminds readers that, 'the secrets of all hearts' will be known (II: 262), a reference to Psalm 44. It is finally the 'upright heart' that 'is necessary to our having a real influencing sense and conviction of the divine ambivalence and benevolence, and consequently, to our peace and comfort' (I.345). Hartley maintains further the absolute vitality of emotion:

Yet we must take care to serve God, with our affections, as well as our outward actions; and indeed, unless we do the first, we shall not long continue to do the last, the internal frame of our minds being the source and spring, from whence our external actions flow. God, who gives us all our faculties and powers, has a right to all; and it is a secret disloyalty and infidelity, not to pay the tribute of our affections. (II.326)

Thus, Hartley points to the accessible and more egalitarian pathway that the passions provide for reaching the divine, against reason and understanding.

He also uses the Bible to reinforce this when he writes that the prior elevation of knowledge was a result of Adam's sin:

They who suppose Adam to be capable of deep speculations [...] set a value upon knowledge considered in itself, and exclusively of its tendency to carry us to God, is a most pernicious error, derived originally from Adam's having eaten of the tree of knowledge. (I.298)

In terms of the connection between religion and the passions, we should note that *Observations* positions itself against Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* where morality takes a kind of precedence over religion, so that we trust people's moral choices, more than we might his or her religious beliefs as indicator of that person's nature: 'If we are told a man is religious, we still ask, "What are his morals?" But, if we hear first that he has honest and moral principles and is a man of natural justice and good temper, we seldom think of the

other question, “Whether he be religious and devout?” (163). For Hartley, morality and faith are dependent on the affections and passions, and morally and religiously virtuous actions overlap, as seen in his seven classes of pleasures and pains where the highest pleasures are those that are benevolent, morally virtuous, and approved by God. For Hartley, ‘Benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, are to be the guides of life, and the compass by which we are to steer our course (II.347). The moral sense has an important role for Hartley. It should be made ‘Part of our primary pursuit’ (II: 337) since it ought to be ‘a great influence in the most explicit and deliberate actions’ (II: 337). Yet this too is an emotional force itself, and ‘approves and commands, or disapproves and forbids, certain dispositions of mind, and bodily actions flowing therefrom’ (II:45) and the subsequent pleasure of the moral sense is ‘the great composure and peace of mind, which those persons enjoy, who make benevolence, piety, and the moral sense, the rule of their lives’ (II.343).

Yet the Theopathic pleasures (love of God, gratitude, confidence, resignation, trust in God’s benignity to mankind, hope of future reward) remain the most important in enabling the person to be good and happy; they relate to the pleasures of sympathy and the moral sense, and the love of God absorbs all ‘the four inferior classes of pleasure’ and enhances all our joys (II: 309). Incidentally, the pleasures of the moral sense could not survive without the pathetic affections, which is why this class precedes it; while for Shaftesbury, each person’s moral compass can be easily identified by the intention behind his or her actions (171), as stated, Hartley’s work diverges because passions or the affections are not the effects of an intrinsic moral character, but can be chosen through new-found desire and knowledge. While Shaftesbury says: ‘it is therefore by affection merely that a creature is esteemed good or ill, natural or unnatural’ since ‘no animal can be said properly to act otherwise than through



affections or passions' (195), Hartley could argue that the affections may follow later, and be in a process of change, since they are always informed by the intellect and our choices.

Despite his refutation of philosophical liberty, Hartley maintains that 'Religion presupposes Free-will in the popular and practical Sense, i.e. it presupposes a voluntary Power over our Affections and Actions' (II: 53); this is because 'after this will is made known to us, and we, in consequence thereof, become desirous of complying with it, a sufficient power of complying with it should be put into our hands' (II: 53). To highlight the validity of his comments and importance of actions' role in religious life, Hartley writes:

This may be illustrated by the consideration of the state of madmen, idiots, children, and brutes, in respect of religion [...] they are destitute of the proper voluntary powers over their affections and actions; the associations requisite thereto having never been formed in idiots, children, and brutes, and being confounded and destroyed in madmen. (II:54)

He concludes: 'For suppose the child to be grown up, and the madmen to recover his senses, i.e. suppose the associations requisite for the voluntary powers to be generated or restored, and religion will claim them as its proper subjects' (II:54). It is solely through actions that passions can be controlled and purified: 'For though our affections are not directly and immediately subject to the voluntary power, yet our actions are; and consequently our affections also mediately' (II: 291). For Hartley, it was the pagans' inability to manifest 'external actions' that caused their virtues to fall short (II.341) and he borrows the biblical teaching: 'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit' (II: 416) to reinforce this point. In referring to this metaphor, Hartley gestures to his own Biblically-

founded contention that ‘Mere ideas, and internal feelings, must be less certain marks of the prevailing permanent disposition of our hearts, than the tenor of our actions, which is the natural and necessary fruit of it’ (II.416).

Hartley argues that actions are the means to shaping our desires. He writes, ‘after a person has governed himself, for a considerable time, with strictness, from a sense of duty, he will find little difficulty afterwards (II.226) and ‘He that at first practices acts of benevolence by constraint, and continues to practise them, will at last have associated such a variety of pleasures with them [...] and beget in himself the affections from which they naturally flow’ (II: 291). He continues to explain that ‘In like manner, if we abstain from malevolent actions, we shall dry up the ill passions, which are their sources’ (II.291). Actions have particular significance, exactly because they are the only means by which virtuous internal feelings can developed if not already existed, and they also in turn, authenticate inner virtue. That choice and effort is involved in reaching this level of pleasure means that each person has an equal opportunity of becoming whom he or she wants to be. The concept that humans ‘are capable of wanting to be different, in their preferences and purposes, from what they are’ (Frankfurt qtd in Rosfort and Stanghellini, *Being a Person* 254), is important to Hartley’s work. This understanding of practising to alter a seemingly fixed self, reminds us of Foucault, who comments, ‘The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning’ (Foucault qtd Gauntlett 116). In these perspectives is an assurance and hope, rather than a fear or avoidance, in the mutability of the human character. As Hartley’s doctrine of association necessitates that “emotional identity” is not an inherent aspect of “personality”, the text invites a reading of a variable emotional character, where personal choice comes to the foreground. As the 1791 reviewer said of volume two: ‘There is, perhaps, no treatise in our language, if in any other, so eminently calculated to better the heart, and

elevate the mind, as the latter part of this work' (Q.Q 365). Furthermore, we should note that the potential for a predetermined and unchanging part of the self is ultimately immaterial for Hartley, and an issue aside from the opportunity and responsibility each person still has to flourish.

### **Self-Annihilation and Perfection**

This is important to consider, since it reframes how we might think about the text's advocacy of Self-Annihilation and Perfection. For Hartley, Self-Annihilation is the eradication of an attention to the self, while the love of others is Perfection. Love of others above self is also the means to happiness: 'our happiness is to arise from the previous annihilation of ourselves' (II.310). Simone Weil's comment on impersonality and perfection is instructive here, allowing us to understand Hartley's own views. She writes:

Truth and beauty dwell on this level of the impersonal and the anonymous. This is the realm of the sacred; on the other level nothing is sacred [...] Perfection is impersonal. Our personality is the part of us which belongs to error and sin. The whole effort of the mystic has always been to become such that there is no part left in his soul to say 'I'. (*Weil Reader* 318)

Such comments express impersonality as a sacred state worth achieving and a means to a liberated version of happiness that is very similar to Hartley's philosophy. The constant process of refinement for both Weil and Hartley is beneficial in itself, and necessary for

spiritual growth. Like Hartley, who believes that ‘As in the body, so in the mind, great and lasting changes are seldom wrought in a short time’ (II.413) but that ‘Love, faith, fear, prayer, will carry men on in a very rapid progress’ (II: 414), so Weil believes ‘Impersonality is only reached by the practice of a form of attention’ (Weil, *Reader* 318). Hartley believes in the agent’s power to achieve perfection, and it is his claim that such a state (and the consequent sense of fulfilment) is reached only through a continual nurturing of selflessness, until the final fostering of God’s own *benevolent* perspective.

More than this, every person can become like God. Coleridge revealed his pleasure in the possibility for this connection with the divine. Gregory Leadbetter explains that in a footnote added to the 1797 edition of ‘Religious Musings’ his interpretation was clear: ‘The truth of the mystical paradox that “All self-annihilated,” the self might make “GOD its Identity,” had (the footnote claimed) been psychologically “demonstrated” by Hartley, and “freed from the charge of Mysticism, by Pistorius” (21). To reach happiness, Hartley believes that we must transpose all pleasures on to those objects and actions that bring pleasure to God:

We must be born again, i.e. have quite new dispositions, and take pleasure in works of piety and charity, as we formerly did in sensual enjoyments, in honour and profit; we must be transformed by the renewal of our minds, walk according to the spirit, have our hearts in heaven, and do all to the glory of God. (II.406)

Yet such growth necessitates that each person recognise and work through the categorized hierarchy of pleasures, from their most basic (those foundational pleasures of Sensation,

Imagination, Ambition and Self-Interest), through to the most sophisticated and selfless pleasures of Sympathy, Theopathy and the Moral Sense. The pleasurable sympathetic affections are those by which we rejoice at the happiness of others (good will, benevolence); the Pleasures of Theopathy are the love of God, with its associates, gratitude, confidence and resignation, by the contemplation of his bounty and benignity to us, and to all his creatures [...] with consequent hope of future reward' (I:489); finally, the pleasures of the Moral Sense are listed as the pleasure of self-approbation on feeling to be possessed with the pleasures of 'certain tempters of mind' and 'actions flowing from them', of 'piety, humility, resignation, gratitude, &c towards God; of benevolence, charity, generosity, compassion, humility, gratitude, &c towards men; of temperance, patience, contentment, &c. in respect of one's own private enjoyments or sufferings' (I.493).

In Hartley's view, it is only the pleasures in these latter three classes that will enable a person to reach God's level of Perfection and achieve 'being united to God' (II.183). The so-called 'scale of perfection' (II.275) relates to Hartley's foremost aspiration to facilitate the 'Art of Arts', that is, 'living happily [...] attaining our greatest possible happiness' (II.197) by feeling pleasure from the most perfect pleasures. This has implications for Jesus as one who will 'save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21) and enable man to reach God, since in *Observations* God can be accessed without Jesus' mediation, but through the passions' ability to teach.<sup>16</sup> Focus rests on the achievement of Jesus' perfection as his main accomplishment and the foundation for God's approval: 'our Saviour's entire devotion to God, and sufferings for the sake of men in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection, which was never proposed, or thought of, before his coming' (II.170) also:

[...] the character of Christ [...] is manifestly superior to all other characters, fictitious or real, whether drawn by historians, orators, or poets. We see in him the most entire devotion or resignation to God, and the most ardent and universal love to mankind, joined with the greatest humility, self-denial, meekness, patience, prudence, and every other virtue, divine and human. (II.167)

Hartley is able to connect the Christian message to his own philosophy, and so prioritize eternal happiness and Mankind's ability to reach Perfection, in the figure of Christ as an inspiration. Christ annihilates himself in benevolence and obedience. His intentions were benevolent: 'according to the New Testament, Christ, being the Lord and creator of all, took upon himself the form of a servant, in order to save all' (II.167). In turn, our 'subjection to Christ, according to the figurative prophetic style of the scriptures, is happiness' (II.434), since 'The design is that of bringing all mankind to an exalted, pure, and spiritual happiness, by teaching, enforcing, and begetting in them love and obedience to God' (II: 127).

Yet while this happiness and perfection can be brought about through reflection and a dedicated attitude towards renewal, the body also has a vital role in teaching the person where true pleasure lies, since it is only the higher pleasures that the body allows to be long-lasting:

we cannot be delivered from the sensuality and selfishness, that seize upon us at our first entrance into life, and advanced to spirituality and uninterestedness, to the love of God and our neighbour, we cannot have our wills broken and our faculties exalted and purified, so as to relish happiness wherever we see it, but by the perpetual correction and reformation of our judgements and desires from painful impressions and associations. (II.181)

Affirming this faith in the body to enable happiness, Hartley's argues that 'if we adopt the mechanical system throughout, then we can only hope and presume, that God will ultimately make the happiness of each individual to outweigh his misery, finitely or infinitely' (II: 395-396). These comments alert us to the affectionate mechanism that Hartley conveys throughout his text, where perfection and happiness are established from the mechanical workings of the body. Hartley stresses that 'perfect self-annihilation and resting in God as our centre' occurs when we pass through the previous pleasures of 'sensuality, and sensual selfishness' to understand the value of the 'virtuous dispositions of benevolence, and the moral sense, and particularly that of the love of God' (II: 282). As this makes clear, understanding of virtue and divinity, comes about through reflecting on, and feeling, how the body functions. Those more selfless pleasures 'check all foregoing' pleasures and 'seem sufficient utterly to extinguish them at last' (II.282), only because they are registered and evaluated by the person, through his or her passions and affections. It is through this mechanical method that we 'take our station in the divine nature' (II.310), and thus it is through the body, the passions and the affections that this spiritualized form of perfection is realized.

## **Conclusion**

Hartley's understanding of body and mind as subject to scientific laws (like the natural world) physicalizes the mind as a material entity. It also awards the body and its organs

increased status as the mediators of all experiences, ideas and feelings. As we have seen in this chapter, while *Observations on Man* claims adherence to the doctrines of association, necessity, and the mechanical mind, Hartley gives physical matter the power of feeling pleasure and pain. He achieves this through his concept of physical vibrations in the body. As affections and passions accompany every experience and are malleable, they offer people the potential to exert control over how they develop morally and emotionally. This enables them to reach God's divine nature. Manipulating the emotions is also the only means of practising free will according to Hartley's system. This central aspect of Hartley's work elevates emotion as that which should be respected for its great potential. The philosopher's vision of the human and his way of describing the science of the body invites us to imagine how his new vocabulary and ideas influenced the way those encountering his notions would think about human experience, especially in terms of the emotions. Dixon reminds us that 'The histories of our social lives, our language, and our self-understanding proceed together' (Dixon, *Revolting Passions* 308), and he draws attention to how our concepts of the passions or affections determine who we are:

It surely makes a difference, for instance, to our experience and understanding of ourselves, whether we think of our anger as being produced by our inner demons or by our inner baboon; of our love as the movement of a soul or the firing of neurons; of our conscience as an inherited emotion or the voice of God; of our frustration and despair as signs of sin and the Fall or of suppressed and unconscious desires. Theories of passions and emotions take their place within larger histories of psychological models and languages, which in turn reflect their social and institutional contexts. (Dixon 308)<sup>17</sup>



This is an especially important point when we consider that Hartley instigated new ways of perceiving the human body, emotion, as well as the causes of all ideas, morality and faith. George Rousseau comments that the eighteenth century witnessed the growing need for 'Internalisation', where 'man is not satisfied to understand himself as a doer of deeds and a thinker of thoughts. He – man – wants to know precisely how his feelings have shaped his knowledge; for the first time he is unable to keep them separate' (174).<sup>18</sup> In light of this, we are encouraged to look again at Wollstonecraft and Blake, both of whom engaged with current philosophical, scientific and religious ideas to understand the human experience more deeply. Chapters Three and Four illuminate the 'Hartlean approach' that these writers employ to promote their feminism. The following chapter will look at Wollstonecraft's work from 1787 to 1796. I show that as Hartlean concepts and discourse become increasingly prevalent in her writing, so the writer is more confident about her feminist message, particularly when women's emotion and their potential to reach perfection are concerned.

## Chapter Three

### Wollstonecraft's Female Emotion and Hartley's Perfectibility

I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both in mind and in body.

*(Rights of Woman 13-14)*

#### Introduction

This chapter illustrates how Hartlean culture enabled, and is reflected by, Mary Wollstonecraft's feminism. In particular, I focus on Wollstonecraft's attention to the power of women's emotion, and the author's interest in the strength of female relationships. Although writing fifty years after the publication of *Observations on Man*, Wollstonecraft's approach to her work resonates with Hartley's. Both writers value faith and the importance of feeling, but also embrace popular scientific approaches to the body, mind, and experience. While Wollstonecraft's amalgamation of Christian imagery, analysis of feeling, and scientific philosophy might seem unnecessary to contemporaries such as Paine and Priestley, she was not invested in 'separating' religion and science. In illuminating her acceptance of the irrational and unknown, I am attentive to how her feminist texts combine an interest in faith and feeling alongside recent often 'conflicting' theories, particularly those regarding association and the mechanical body/mind. I deal with Wollstonecraft's writing

chronologically, beginning with *The Cave of Fancy* and *Mary, A Fiction* both written in 1787, followed by *Original Stories* published by Joseph Johnson in 1788 and revised for the 1791 edition. I observe a shift in 1792 when Wollstonecraft narrates the feminist message of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* using Hartlean concepts more obviously, and finally I analyse the unfinished *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*, written in 1797. This selection outlines the progression in the writer's radicalism as she absorbs Hartlean ideas and demonstrates increasingly clearly this synthesis of faith, scientific philosophy and feminism. Through taking this approach to her work, Wollstonecraft becomes more confident about the female body and the experience-formed mind. Tracing how Wollstonecraft makes use of Hartlean terminology or concepts reveals two important points. First situating Wollstonecraft within Hartlean culture offers a new perspective on her work; this draws out her theistic and Christian-based arguments that also reference a theoretical (Lockean/Newtonian) approach to the body, mind and feelings. Second, Hartley's approach is shown to appeal to radical writers and to be relevant in this intellectual and liberal environment. This research draws attention to a particular radical culture that was rooted in theism, but interested in new ideas about the body and mind. Wollstonecraft's texts reveal how the writers included her own bodily and emotional past into her work. I see this as relevant to what we might consider a 'post-Hartlean' age that valued experience and saw its potential to explain identity. Lyndall Gordon's biography of Wollstonecraft examines in detail the ways in which the writer includes her life in her work. The author's approach points towards how writers themselves, and this culture, valued the experience-formed body and mind to offer wisdom to their readers. Wollstonecraft's literature attains both personal and political value because of this dual nature. It is here that we see Wollstonecraft departing from Hartley, since she trusts the

power of her work (and therefore the experience of reading) to initiate change in readers' ideas and emotions.

Another important concept that separates Wollstonecraft's work from Hartlean philosophy is her belief that female emotion is tarnished when educated solely in relation to masculine models of power and desire. To establish this point, Wollstonecraft dramatizes the real feelings she experienced as a daughter, sister, and close friend. As a daughter, she had defended her mother against her father's violence. Gordon explains that 'Mr Wollstonecraft [Wollstonecraft's father] treated his dogs, as he did his wife, to the same unpredictable switches of mood' (11). Wollstonecraft also facilitated the escape of her sister Bess from an abusive relationship and witnessed the woman's subsequent emotional breakdown; as a friend she secured a home at Newington Green for her beloved companion Fanny Blood, with whom she aspired to live in the future. Wollstonecraft was frustrated to see her friend marry a man she felt did not deserve her and was herself notoriously vulnerable with the men she loved: Fuseli rejected her, leaving her humiliated; the betrayals of her lover, Gilbert Imlay, provoked two suicide attempts. Wollstonecraft's marred understanding of marriage meant that as a young woman she vowed never to marry fearing that the 'fate of most married pairs' was that matrimonial delight should pass into 'disgust' after 'the raptures have certainly subsided' (Wollstonecraft qtd Gordon 30).

Despite her negative feelings towards romantic love between men and women, feelings of intense affection for another person, whether male or female, are of particular importance to Wollstonecraft. For her, close personal relationships have both social and religious ramifications (and vice versa). This chapter traces how Wollstonecraft's mistrust of male-female relationships inspires her interest in women's emotion, especially her desire to

re-educate them. It also looks at how female-female relationships come to be even more important in providing a safe space for women to show love to each other. Wollstonecraft writes about women's great potential for emotional cultivation in particularly Hartlean terms in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*:

I am, indeed, persuaded that the heart, as well as the understanding, is opened by cultivation; and by, which may not appear so clear, strengthening the organs; I am not now talking of momentary flashes of sensibility, but of affections. And, perhaps, in the education of both sexes, the most difficult task is so to adjust instruction as not to narrow the understanding, whilst the heart is warmed by the generous juices of spring, just raised by the electric fermentation of the season; nor to dry up the feelings by employing the mind in investigations remote from life. (85)

Building on the theme that male-female relationships (particularly within marriage) are damaging, she explains that due to women's impoverished education, the wife is most often lacking in the benevolent qualities necessary for the type of perfection and divinity we have seen Hartley describe. According to the author, rather than growing in virtue, the wife becomes 'a cold-hearted, narrow-minded woman [...] jealous of the little kindness which her husband shows to his relations [...] her sensibility not rising to humanity' (*Rights of Woman* 4). Such a woman 'has never thought, much less acted for herself. She has only learned to please men, to depend gracefully on them' (63). This view from 1792 should be remembered when we consider Wollstonecraft's ongoing interests in the female-female bond. The attempt she makes to rehabilitate women reflects the culture she inhabited that similarly sought to

explore their potential. It also represents the intense loving friendships Wollstonecraft enjoyed with Jane Arden and Fanny Blood, and the significant kindness and loyalty she received from Mrs Burghs, Ruth Barlow, Mary Hays and Amelia Alderson. Wollstonecraft in turn inspired and drew close to her young charge in Ireland, Margaret King, with whom she maintained contact in secret. These women and their bonds are powerful examples of Mary Wollstonecraft's own personal interest and affection for women that existed in addition to her political aspirations for the sex.

The more recent work on Wollstonecraft represents a turn towards considering sexuality and emotion within a less hetero-normative context.<sup>1</sup> Monographs by Ashley Tauchert (2001) and Barbara Taylor (2003), as well as the recent *Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft* (2002), are important contributions that give attention to the writer's work, rather than to received ideas about her life,<sup>2</sup> in order that new and fruitful interpretations on her philosophy and radicalism can be offered.<sup>3</sup> Tauchert reads Wollstonecraft in an innovative way, grouping her writing into four stages to trace the changing expression of her female subjectivity. This argument is related firmly to Wollstonecraft's relationship with her body as well as her feminism; Tauchert sees the author initially rejecting 'the female', female body, and same-sex desire, as she tries to foreclose the feminine; however, by 1797, love and friendship between women is represented and the writer even addresses the reader as female or feminine (112). This is evidence, in Tauchert's view, of her greater understanding of her own female embodiment.<sup>4</sup> Wollstonecraft's growing bodily confidence and feminist consciousness can be related to her philosophical engagement, which was supported by the intellectual culture she inhabited. Taylor's alternative approach to Wollstonecraft is sensitive to her religiously-inspired radicalism, responding to previous work that downplays the significance of religious faith to her work.<sup>5</sup>

Taylor dedicates time to textual analysis of a large number of Wollstonecraft's work, historicizing them within their intellectual context. This also allows her to foreground Wollstonecraft's vision and her belief in the value of emotion, by reminding us of the status awarded to the imagination in the eighteenth century. Taylor's reading updates previous depictions of the writer as solely committed to reason and a non-religious engagement with the world, presenting instead how her faith directly encouraged her feminism and informed her feelings. For this scholar, Wollstonecraft's work surrounds the question, 'What shape does a woman's inner life take when it is lived in a right relationship with her Maker?' (Taylor, 'Religious Foundations' 102)

New readings of Wollstonecraft also appear in the recent *Cambridge Companion* dedicated to the writer, a collection of essays that draws together the most important Wollstonecraft scholars and captures pioneering debates in the field. A significant essay for this chapter examines 'the sexuality of genius' and foregrounds the author's 'power to unsettle the homosexual/heterosexual split that the twentieth century made so rigid' (228). In this piece Andrew Elfenbein asserts that Wollstonecraft has been wrongfully 'hyper-heterosexualized' in the twentieth century (231-233), an issue that obscures her experimental approach to genius and sexual roles. Elfenbein explains that as male geniuses were already seen to deviate from their gender, Wollstonecraft presents a female genius with a female masculinity that requires a 'transgressive sexuality' outside of bourgeois marriage and heterosexuality (238). Where this essay is compelling is where it presents the connections between intellect, sexuality and gender roles. This essay presents a compelling connection between intellect, sexuality and gender roles, tracing the interconnectedness between social relationships and women's academic autonomy.

Examining how Wollstonecraft was influenced by Hartlean culture, redresses an oversight in Wollstonecraft Studies that usually sees her only responding to polemical texts by authors such as Rousseau or Burke, rather than incorporating philosophical ideas within her culture for her own purposes. G.J Barker-Benfield's extensive study on sensibility is one of the few texts to refer to the connection between Hartley and Wollstonecraft in particular. Tracing Wollstonecraft's investment in the 'widely popularized [...] nerve paradigm' (16), he also locates her influences as Locke, Newton and Dr Cheyne, which reflects her Hartlean interests.<sup>6</sup> In the edited version of Wollstonecraft's novels James Kinsley and Gary Kelly acknowledge the influence of Hartley as fundamental. Discussing Wollstonecraft's first novel *Mary*, they explain: 'Using the language of Locke and Hartley, *Mary* attempts to illustrate the philosophy of necessity, as it was later expressed in the English Jacobin doctrine that 'the characters of men originate from their external circumstances.' (xi). Wollstonecraft here 'reveals her allegiance to the empirical psychology of Locke and Hartley as adapted by Richard Price and Rousseau' (206). Kinsley and Kelly also reference the general culture that emerged around Hartlean/Priestlean thought at this time: 'The religious impulse to self-examination (many of Mary Wollstonecraft's closest friends were Dissenters) accords with the philosophical method of 'necessitarianism.' Mary reconstructs her mental history in an effort to free herself from the past and the 'association of ideas' which produced her excessive sensibility' (xi).

Hartley's value for the feminist writer has been acknowledged despite the difficulty in proving influence: 'There is no direct evidence of Hartley's influence on Wollstonecraft, but given the admiration with which his ideas were regarded by enlightened intellectuals, it is hard to imagine she was not aware of them' (Taylor, *Imagination* 110). Taylor adds further in a note: 'David Hartley [...] was immensely popular among British progressives, for obvious



reasons [...] Intervening in individuals' circumstances and education [...] became a recipe for moral perfection' (272). These brief references gesture to the symbolic value of Hartley in the culture. Although, as Taylor suggests, we cannot prove that the writer studied *Observations on Man*, we can still read her work according to his ideas and approach with which her contemporaries were also engaging; in so doing, we can see how the culture in which Wollstonecraft lived facilitated her radicalism in a way that would not have been possible earlier. According to this view, I build on previous scholars' work by presenting Wollstonecraft as a philosophically-engaged thinker, dedicated to intricate exploration of her own feelings, and valuing her personal experience because of the 'post-Hartlean' culture she inhabited. Hartley's work was published in full from 1791. There is evidence of its appeal amongst intellectuals. William Godwin (later Wollstonecraft's husband) recorded reading Hartley in July 1792, September 1794 and throughout February in 1796.<sup>7</sup> So too did close friends Thomas Wedgwood<sup>8</sup> and Mary Hays read Hartley. In 1796, Godwin wrote to Hays about the woman's enthusiastic acceptance for a Hartlean way of thinking and articulated his own dissimilar reading of the philosopher:

I know you will tell me, & you will tell yourself, a great deal about constitution, early associations, & the indissoluble chain of habits & sentiments. But I answer with small fear of being erroneous, "It is a mistake to suppose that the heart is not to be compelled. There is no topic, in fact, that may not be subjected to the laws of investigation & reasoning. Pleasure, happiness, is the supreme good; & happiness is susceptible of being analysed." I grant, that the state of a human mind cannot be changed at once, but, had you worshipped at the altar of reason but half as assiduously as you have sacrificed at the shrine of illusion, your present happiness would have been enviable, as your present distress is worthy of compassion. If men

would but take the trouble to ask themselves once every day, Why should I be miserable?  
how many to whom life is a burthen, would become chearful [sic] & contented? (Godwin 83)<sup>9</sup>

Through this exchange we can conceive the way in which Hartlean concepts lent themselves to interpretation and debate, especially owing to their implications for personal feeling and experience.

### ***The Cave of Fancy: Criticizing Male Emotion and the Failure of the Romantic Bond***

After *Observations* was reprinted in 1791, the more holistic presentation of the text as interested in moral, Christian and scientific subjects, was made visible. Although emerging from a culture sympathetic to Hartley's ideas (and where the 1749 two-volume work was already popular amongst dissenters), *The Cave of Fancy* and *Mary: A Fiction*, would have been more mediated through discourse surrounding Priestley's *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* (1775).

*The Cave of Fancy* was being written before Wollstonecraft had any association with the Johnson Circle. Without the strong network of readers and writers within this Hartlean space, it is not surprising that the tale is less interested in exploring how the body, ethics, feeling and faith link together. The short piece has little plot, but mainly comprises of the life-story of the unnamed female spirit, who is speaking to a solitary sage, and a child he has adopted. The narrative opens as the sage, Sagestus, observes the aftermath of a fatal shipwreck. He coldly inspects the dead, and then saves the only survivor, the child, whom he

hopes to educate. Sagestus believes himself more capable of this task than the girl's mother, because from examining the dead woman's body, he judges her to be 'clogged by prejudices [...] Not having the courage to form an opinion of her own, she adhered, with blind partiality, to those she adopted' (123). More than this, the sage is 'convinced that the orphan was not very unfortunate in having lost such a mother', and to effect his appropriation of her, he re-names the girl 'after himself, Sagesta' (125). While this derogation of the feminine and the maternal role begins the story, the girl is 'particularly struck and interested' (127) by the presence of the female spirit. This attraction gestures to the intrinsic bond between women, regardless of Sagestus' previous dismissal. The spirit offers her own lesson to Sagesta, and her teaching comes in the form of her life-story, which discusses her obligatory marriage to a kind, but emotionally inadequate older merchant, and her repressed love and desire for a dying married man. The issues here represented reflect Wollstonecraft's burgeoning feminism: her interest in how male-female relationships can threaten women's happiness; the question of woman's potential; and the capacity for women to help each other.

As in the later novels, the narrative frames erotic love as vital, and the conclusion of the piece argues one of Wollstonecraft's most important points, which is also reiterated in various ways throughout her other writings, that 'Earthly love leads us to heavenly' (154) and 'allies us to the Deity' (155). Hartley made biological/physical link between loving others, experiencing happiness, and becoming closer and more similar to God; these states were connected through his doctrine of vibrations and warranted his intense discussion of the various pleasures, and their suitability to be made the 'Rule of Life'. For Wollstonecraft too, 'he who formed the human soul, only can fill [sic] it, and the chief happiness of an immortal being must arise from the same source as its existence' (*Cave of Fancy* 154). Such a claim reveals the Hartlean idea that happiness must be sought outside the self or worldly pursuits.

Furthermore, the sacred ramifications of earthly love render erotic love important as a means to bringing people to God. This makes sexual inequality a vital issue in need of attention for both sexes' spiritual development.

The most interesting and significant exchange between Sagestus and the spirit is precisely about sexual difference; this is also the most 'Hartlean moment' in the story, and where we can see Hartlean language asserting feminist sentiments. At this point, Sagestus appropriates a specifically Hartlean discourse to defend male emotion, responding to the spirit's accusation that men do not distinguish sufficiently between tenderness and sensibility (135). The sage states about sensibility:

I should say that it is the result of acute senses, finely fashioned nerves, which vibrate at the slightest touch, and convey such clear intelligence to the brain, that it does not require to be arranged by the judgement. Such persons instantly enter into the characters of others, and instinctively discern what will give pain to every human being; their own feelings are so varied that they seem to contain in themselves, not only all the passions of the species, but their various modifications. (135-136)

This conception of emotion is more aligned to a Priestlean reading of *Observations* that places emphasis on the purely mechanical workings of the body and mind. That Wollstonecraft puts this language and definition of sensibility in the male's voice reflects her conflict regarding materialism and perhaps her view that such ideas are 'male' and lacking in emotion or spirituality. Unlike philosophers such as Priestley, that were beginning to separate Christian thought and new ideas about the body, mind and world, Wollstonecraft is interested

in a more integrated approach to life that sees value in a Hartlean synthesis. For the sage, sensibility does not require engagement, contemplation, mental effort or spirituality, but only the mechanical workings of healthy senses and nerves. Of this, the narrator is critical, and the sage's description is revealing of how absolute adherence to a theory or framework can restrict the development of the heart: Sagestus clearly understands the theory and the science of benevolence, but does not apply his knowledge to people. This detachment from his feelings is powerfully revealed, not only in the shipwreck scene (during his emotionless inspection and judgement of the dead bodies and the child's mother), but also through the contrast with the highly sensitive and caring female spirit. As his name suggests, Sagestus is wise, but his appearance is haunting, showing the bodily impact of a life where learning has been prioritized above a relational way of existing: 'His hollow eyes, sunk in their orbits' were 'turned inwards', rather than contemplating the world or others; furthermore: 'Intense thinking during foreshore [sic] and ten years, had whitened the scattered locks on his head' (100). This man has more ability to empathize with nature who 'had unlocked her most hidden secrets' (90), than with humanity, with which he has little or no contact.<sup>10</sup> He has 'retired from the view of vulgar objects', living in a 'sequestered valley' (99), and while not unkind, Sagestus's behaviour towards people is generally cold, theoretical, and at times aggressively male.<sup>11</sup>

Incompatibility between men and women is displayed even more specifically in the relationship between the spirit and her husband, which reminds us of the relationships Wollstonecraft witnessed herself. In this case, the spirit narrates sexual difference in terms of her husband's contrasting approach to sensibility, which she sees as the root of their difficulty. She explains to her listeners his less refined feelings (which remind us of the sage's philosophy of feeling that is not practised): 'The man I am describing was humanity

itself; but frequently he did not understand me; many of my feelings were not to be analysed by his common sense' (136). This husband has a 'benevolent heart', but ironically, his lack of emotional depth causes people suffering because he 'bluntly spoke his thoughts without observing the pain it gave' (135). The disparity between the man's heart and his lack of actions or empathy shows the superficiality of his refinement that is self-focused, instead of being translated into his practical behaviour towards others. The narrator uses Hartlean vocabulary especially aptly to express the moral and religious repercussions of this man's inability to truly sympathize with the feelings of others:

His friendships for he had many friends, gave him pleasure unmixed with pain; his religion was coldly reasonable, because he wanted fancy, and he did not feel the necessity of finding or creating, a perfect object, to answer the one engraved on his heart: the sketch was faint. He went with the stream, and rather caught a character from the society he lived in, than spread one around him. (136-137)

This man's avoidance of pain, 'pleasure unmixed with pain', his 'coldly reasonable' religion, the lack of interest in the 'perfect object', as well as his subsequently unfulfilling relationships, are clearly thought to be related, just as they are in Hartlean philosophy; the spirit is critical that the man has simply absorbed his personality from experiences, and her engagement with Hartlean ideas offers a striking impression of the man and his approach to life.<sup>12</sup>

It is important for Wollstonecraft that these personal character traits are then emulated in the couple bond and impact on the woman's life. Even at the marriage proposal, this man

feels only 'pleasure', since 'transport was not made for his soul' (145), and he is later also unable to discern his wife's true feelings. This particular relationship highlights the disconnect in the novel between male and female ways of feeling and discerning. According to the spirit, the marriage is only arranged because the man 'mistook my tenderness for love' (145). In terms of her own affections for her lover, she says that her husband would never think or 'discover that nature had separated us, by making me alive to such different sensations' (145). When she continually longs for the man, her husband misreads her: 'My melancholy, my uneven spirits, he attributed to my extreme sensibility, and loved me the better for possessing qualities he could not comprehend' (150). The narrator gestures to how this man's acceptance of his own lack of emotional understanding, denies the woman's agency in the service of his own desires.

Hartlean concepts are used by the spirit to understand and validate her emotions, where she explains that her bodily feelings are formed outside of her control, through association. Such self-knowledge offers her comfort and strength. On thinking of her lover, she inevitably becomes 'Alive to every human affection' because she is enjoying her 'nature' that she believes 'reason [...] could not change' (150). Memory of this man is not only an idea, but also lodged physically in the body: 'the resigned, pallid look of my lover, haunted my imagination, and fixed itself in the centre of my brain' (146-147). After her lover dies the bodily emotions remain because they are re-released when the idea of him is presented to her mind, much in the way Hartley described, a concept that had been generating interest. Rather than forgetting the man, she felt she could 'without a crime, indulge a passion, that grew more ardent than ever when my imagination only presented him to my view' (149). With regard to the husband she does not love, her body takes over so she instinctively reacts against his touch and 'snatched' her hand away from him in anguish after he takes it

‘tenderly’ in affection (146). The spirit does not have a sense that she can cultivate her emotions to love her husband (as Hartlean theory suggests), rather she subscribes more to the image of the ‘mechanical mind’ that Priestley had promoted, so her behaviour and emotions are fixed necessarily. Even at this early time of writing, Wollstonecraft demonstrates faith in the body’s responses and confidence in her heroine’s desires. It is precisely the grounding of her heroine in the mechanical workings of the body that allows her character to live without guilt.

Demonstrating this, the spirit’s way of relating to others is directly connected to her early experiences, thus implying that she has no freedom to decide her later actions, just as Priestley/Hartley suggested. This way of narrating the individual through her past is revealing of a culture fascinated with how specific events dictate a person’s character and life choices. In this case, the early experiences revolve around the heroine’s mother, revealing a difficult relationship that Wollstonecraft herself had lived through. The spirit claims that the ‘first sensation’ she remembers was ‘pity’ for her mother’s troubles (131), and the intensity of this female-female bond makes a lasting, physical impact. Speaking of her mother, she says ‘her sorrows had knit me firmly to her, and my chief care was to give her proofs of affection’ (134). While this relates to Wollstonecraft’s own experience of protecting her mother, the story’s events reveal explicitly the association created between the heroine’s feelings of love and the vision of sorrow. Even as a child, in terms of her friends ‘The gallantry that afforded my companions [...] so much pleasure, I despised; I wished more to be loved than admired, for I could love’ (134). The spirit is one who understands how to give, because she has never had the pleasure of receiving. The dual nature of a text, which intertwines both fiction and biographical details, reflects the culture in question that gave such credence to experience. The heroine departs from Wollstonecraft however, when she marries the merchant. This



develops the theoretical nature of the tale, since the spirit accepts his proposal only because pity absorbs her: 'Too soon I found that I was his only comfort [...] in a moment of enthusiastic gratitude and tender compassion, I offered him my hand' (145). These are the same circumstances that evoked her affection for the lover, to whom she was attracted because 'He was unfortunate, had many cares to struggle with [...] perhaps pity might first have awoke my tenderness' (139).

What is interesting with regard to *The Cave of Fancy* is that the female spirit's positive emotional experiences are nevertheless present in the male-female bond. Such optimism for male-female relationships is lost in Wollstonecraft's later fiction. In the case of the unfinished novella, the love and attraction the spirit feels for the lover is specifically related to their equal emotional sophistication: the man had 'greatness of mind, and those combinations of feeling which are so difficult to describe' (138); as a result she says 'we almost intuitively discerned each other's sentiments; the heart opened itself, not chilled by reserve, nor afraid of misconstruction. But if virtue inspired loved, love gave new energy to virtue, and absorbed every selfish passion' (143). This sense of love 'absorbing' all selfish passions within it resonates particularly strongly with Hartley's idea of perfection, that is, selflessness and benevolence. For both Hartley and Wollstonecraft this intense love has religious connotations; the erotic bond between the spirit and her lover is made sacred, where love enables the woman's divine vision. Contemplating this man she presupposes the next life with him and is transformed by happiness, appearing to possess a new spiritual body:

But I shall soon see him, she exclaimed, as much superior to his former self [...] As she spoke, a glow of delight animated each feature; her countenance appeared transparent; and

she silently anticipated the happiness she should enjoy, when she should enter those mansions, where death-divided friends should meet, to part no more. (138-139)

Yet this love is not reciprocated but based on the spirit's passion, which limits its power. The narrator is ambivalent about what will develop from heterosexual relationships in her current society. The spirit's own doubt as to the depth of this bond is obvious when she tells Sagesta: 'I also discovered that I saw through a false medium' (154), and 'Worthy the mortal was I adored, I should not long have loved him with the ardour I did, had fate united us, and broken the delusion the imagination so artfully wove' (154).

I suggest this story was abandoned because of the competing narratives at work that could not be resolved by Wollstonecraft. While aiming to present the spirit as a heroic martyr in her act of benevolence in marrying her husband, she also has this protagonist admit that by obeying society's rules, she never finds peace, happiness or understanding. She reports 'I often repeated with steady conviction, that virtue was not an empty name, and that, in following the dictates of duty, I had not bidden adieu to content' (148). Yet she also concedes: '[...] the gratulations of my mind, when I thought that this sacrifice was heroic, all tended to deceive me' (146). The narrative implies that in bypassing her true feelings in favour of society's ideas of propriety and virtue, the spirit is left unhappy. Her lack of clarity or wisdom makes her a less fit example for Sagesta, so the connection between the women does not flourish. Her initial advice is that goodness must be 'reined in by principles' (130) and she claims pride that 'Remorse has not reached me, because I firmly adhered to my principles' (154). It is possible to see one meaning of her story suggesting that submission to duty above feelings creates suffering and the diminishes of the person; equally however, and

taken more literally, the spirit may see herself as the proud martyr who suffered for her sense of duty and love. The spirit alerts the child to the inconsistency between her advice and her tale which makes interpretation of the story difficult: ‘my history will afford you more instruction than mere advice’ (131). Such a statement can be regarded as the true lesson of her narrative, which asks the child to think and learn from her teacher’s lived errors.

### ***Mary, A Fiction* Part I: Association and Female Solidarity**

The inclusion of two adult female characters in *Mary* allows Wollstonecraft to examine the female-female bond more closely and to explore female emotion even further. This novel encodes Hartlean culture, specifically the rethinking of models of feeling and the brain that can also be seen in Hartley’s work. As the brain was increasingly seen to work according to general laws, women’s feelings and experiences were just as valid as their male counterparts; the intellectual atmosphere that upheld the sanctity of women lent itself to see them as newly powerful figures. Wollstonecraft’s novel asserts the value of the heroine, Mary, as a deeply passionate and trust-worthy female companion, especially to the women in her life. While on the one hand, the unhappy ending for the female characters reveals the novel’s general hesitance to fully promote the feminine, on the other hand, the novel is successful in its use of Hartlean concepts to frame the issue of woman’s potential. *Mary* builds on themes from *The Cave of Fancy* with a more positive and distinctive message that elicits sympathy for women.

Already positioning the novel as both philosophically-informed and feminist, the advertisement for *Mary* describes the work as one where ‘the mind of woman, who has

thinking powers is displayed' (*Mary Advertisement*). The writer continues with an academic, and Hartlean, explanation of the novel's intention:

The female organs have been thought too weak for this arduous employment [...] Without arguing physically about possibilities – in a fiction, such a being may be allowed to exist; whose grandeur is derived from the operations of its own faculties, not subjugated to opinion; but drawn by the individual from the original source. (*Advertisement*)

Writing about the novel, Syndy McMillen Conger argues that: 'Modern readers are apt to think that Wollstonecraft's first novel suffers from lack of clear focus. Is she, they may ask, writing about feeling, education, intellect, or all three? If three, just what is their connection?' (36). For McMillen Conger, the connection between them is sensibility:

Wollstonecraft generally sees sensibility as a necessary precondition for education. People who have it may still go astray; but people without it are only barely educable, if at all. Sensibility's special feature for Wollstonecraft is its capacity to soften the waxen mind, make it, as it is in childhood, newly impressionable or malleable, hence open to change. (37)

McMillen Conger's interpretation of sensibility is persuasive, but Wollstonecraft's expansive thinking can also be linked to her exploration of the Hartlean culture she inhabited. We can see from the novel that the latest thinking regarding association and necessity is employed by the writer in order to make her claim for women's rights, and the power of the feminine. At

this stage in her writing Wollstonecraft's use of Hartlean discourse and concepts establishes the novel's commitment to discrediting the notion of a pre-existent or sexed personality that can be used to describe and disempower women.<sup>13</sup> Rather, what emerges most strongly is the author's Hartlean assertion that the heroine Mary's circumstances create her character. Furthermore, Mary's own understanding that past experiences form personality, allows her to deal with the inadequate behaviour of the women she loves. These are important points that offer an idea of how a woman educated to understand Hartley's theories could relate to herself and the world.

*Mary* demonstrates that owing to early experiences of being 'Neglected in every respect' (5), Mary, is actually partly untouched by ideology as she matures. This allows her to gain a unique perspective and subject position in society, and her unusual story is told through her feelings. Having been 'left to the operations of her own mind, she considered every thing that came under her inspection, and learned to think' (5), an education that accounts for all her future actions and experiences. This is a novel particularly interested in Mary's mind, and states that she 'had a wonderful quickness in discerning distinctions and combining ideas, that at first glance did not appear to be similar' (16). Mary is taught to read by the house-keeper and learns French from a maid (5). She is also naturally religious. In particular, she learns of God in a Hartlean way, transferring positive emotions on to the natural world and forming her own associations of this with the deity in the mind: 'Sublime ideas filled her young mind – always connected with devotional sentiments; extemporary effusions of gratitude, and rhapsodies of praise would burst often from her, when she listened to the birds, or pursued the deer' (5).<sup>14</sup> Mary's 'benevolence [...] knew no bounds' (10) and she is deeply attached to the 'Creator' (10).

Mary's first adversity comes with the death of her brother, when, suddenly an heiress, she is trained in the skills that will make her suitable for a husband and married against her will. The effects of this are described in particularly Hartlean/Priestlean terms, where her body appears to shut down after the marriage ceremony: 'Mary rolled her eyes about, then, with a vacant stare, fixed them on her father's face; but they were no longer a sense; they conveyed no ideas to the brain' (15). Estranged from her husband, Mary's most crucial love-story manifests when she befriends Ann, to whom she is devoted throughout her life. The narrator explains that Mary 'loved Ann better than anyone in the world' (15); she claims herself, 'I cannot live without her!' (26), and she knows that 'she could not have talked of her passion to any human creature' (49). Important in this novel is that while the intensity of Mary's feelings for Ann are not reciprocated, this is her most meaningful relationship and sees the heroine inspired, hopeful and constantly developing herself. When Ann dies from her illness, a new suitor, Henry, who had been attracted Mary continues his advances. Yet despite being flattered, Mary is unfulfilled by this relationship and becomes increasingly weak. Returning to England she devotes time to caring for Henry, interested in their connection and in his ability to penetrate her thoughts. By the story's end however, and when Henry has died, the narrator concludes that Mary is left with 'a heart in which there was a void, that even benevolence and religion could not fill' (68). As well as this emotional/mental suffering, 'Her delicate state of health did not promise long life' and in moments of 'joy' that 'dart across her mind' she 'thought she was hastening to that world *where there is neither marrying, nor giving in marriage*' (68).

The story narrated has strong resonances with Wollstonecraft's own life, especially her dedication to Fanny Blood. She wrote about her relationship with Fanny that 'This connexion must give colour to my future days' (Wollstonecraft qtd Gordon 23). Blood died at

a young age in 1785, and Wollstonecraft nursed her until this time, travelling to Lisbon to be with her when she feared for Fanny's life. Reporting on their very first meeting, Godwin explained that the 'impression Mary received from this spectacle [of seeing Fanny caring for her siblings] was indelible; and, before the interview was concluded, she had taken, in her heart, the vows of eternal friendship' (Godwin qtd Gordon 16). Using these real feelings and analysing her experiences, Wollstonecraft is eager to seek a correspondence between the character Mary's early emotional experiences and her later benevolent behaviour, especially to her female friend. This has two effects; first it demonstrates the potential of women to be selfless, profound and deeply complex in their feelings; second, it depicts the impossibility for such an unconventional woman to exist happily in the contemporary society. The absence of Ann haunts the novel after her death, and the reader is forced to consider how Mary's life might have been different with her companion at her side.

Mary is depicted by Wollstonecraft as a model of benevolence. She knew well the 'luxury of doing good' from an early age, when 'the sweet tears of benevolence frequently moistened her eyes' (10); as a witness to her father's abuse of her mother, Mary's compassion and her strength are evoked. This man is 'tyrannical and passionate [...] easily irritated when inebriated' (5), yet this brings forth for her mother 'all Mary's tenderness, and [she] exercised her compassion so continually, that it became more than a match for self-love' (5). This Hartlean idea of selfishness being replaced by benevolence is central and reveals the heroine reaching the Hartlean stage of perfection discussed in Volume II of *Observations*. Yet how such a character is developed is more important to Wollstonecraft than the effects at this stage in her writing. The narrator explains explicitly how past impressions dictate the heroine's future actions. For example, Mary looks after 'A little girl who attended in the nursery' and who 'fell sick' (6). When she finds the mother, a 'bleeding

corpse' and 'heard the dismal account' of the circumstances of this death, 'so strongly did it impress her imagination, that [...] Tortured by it, she at last made a vow, that if she was ever a mistress of family she would herself watch over every part of it. The impression this accident made was indelible' (6). The emotional impact of 'impressions' is evidenced in Hartley's work and mediated into the culture more widely allowing readers to take seriously Mary's experience. It is made clear in the novel that for Mary, pity and love are one and the same feeling, and that she has a strong urge to protect. The narrator explains explicitly, that this is what makes her love Ann: 'Ann's misfortunes and ill health were strong ties to bind Mary to her' so that 'she wished so continually to have a home to receive her in, that it drove every desire out of her mind' (14). Mary is one who must help others, because 'Her benevolence, indeed, knew no bounds'; the author continues: 'the distress of others carried her out of herself; and she rested not till she had relieved or comforted them. The warmth of her compassion often made her so diligent, that many things occurred to her, which might have escaped a less interested observer' (10). When Henry is ill and she cannot care for him in place of his mother, 'Mary felt for the first time in her life, envy, she wished involuntarily, that all the comfort he received should be from her (57). As the Hartlean word 'involuntarily' suggests, Mary does not have control over how she feels, since these feelings are due to her past experiences. Chapter two of the novel concluded by remarking that although 'Her understanding was strong and clear, when not clouded by her feelings [...] she was too much the creature of impulse, and the slave of compassion' (7), a description that draws attention to her emotional isolation, since she does not intellectually reflect on how she feels as Hartley would advise. As Kinsley and Kelly accord, this also refers directly to the 'necessary' development of Mary's sensibility gestured at above (208).



## ***Mary, A Fiction Part II: Defending Female Inadequacy and Refusing Male Authority***

It is precisely a result of women's emotional weakness that the female-female bond is doomed to failure. Mary's mother is the first disappointment in this respect: 'After the mother's throes she felt very few sentiments of maternal tenderness: the children were given to nurses, and she played with her dogs' (4). She also lacks female solidarity, and cannot relate to her daughter (7) only feeling mild jealousy over her as another woman (5). Her mother is someone with whom Mary feels vulnerable as a child, and cannot share her private thoughts: 'She had once, or twice, told her little secrets to her mother; they were laughed at, and she determined never to do it again. In this manner she was left to reflect on her own feelings' (7). As an adult Mary's relationship with Ann is equally doomed. Mary had 'hoped now to experience the pleasure of being beloved' with this friend (8), but the hopelessness of this expectation is remarked upon: 'this hope led to new sorrows, and, as usual, paved the way for disappointment' (8).<sup>15</sup> The disparity between their love for each other is an important part of the story, and Mary laments that:

When her friend was all the world to her, she found she was not necessary to her happiness; and her delicate mind could not bear to obtrude her affection, or receive love as an alms, the offspring of pity. Very often she ran to her with delight, and not perceiving anything of the same kind in Ann's countenance, she has shrunk back. (9)

Both Eliza and Ann's inadequacies are justified owing to their past experiences. The opening of *Mary* offers a detailed account of Mary's mother as a way to demonstrate how past impressions form character.<sup>16</sup> Referring to Eliza in her youth as 'a gentle, fashionable girl, with a kind of indolence in her temper, which might be termed negative good-nature' (1), the narrator immediately explains how Eliza's weak and shallow disposition was acquired:

She was educated with the expectation of a large fortune, of course became a mere machine: the homage of her attendants made a great part of her puerile amusements, and she never imagined there were any relative duties for her to fulfil: notions of her own consequence, by these means, were interwoven in her mind, and the years of youth spent in acquiring a few superficial accomplishments, without having any taste for them. (1)

The narrator emphasizes that education has formed and deeply moulded the mind of Eliza, who develops in completely the opposite manner in which the moralist Hartley would advise: she became one who 'readily submitted' to her father's will (1) and 'had a good opinion of her own merit' (2). She is 'lukewarm' about her 'religious duties' (6) and even physically weak owing to her learned aspirations to be feminine: to 'complete her delicacy' she had 'so relaxed her nerves that she became a mere nothing' (2). This reference to her nerves being inevitably affected by life experiences shows Wollstonecraft's absorption of the Hartlean culture she inhabited, where ideas and attitudes were thought to inform the state of the body (especially the nervous system). Finally, this woman is emotionally inadequate, with 'none of those feelings which are not easily analysed' (3). Despite this damning portrayal of Eliza's

character, this information regarding her early experience and education allows Mary the opportunity of understanding her faults. While Mary's mother 'had often disappointed her' (5-6), the daughter feels the necessary compassion to enable reconciliation.<sup>17</sup> This is a level of understanding that Eliza's husband cannot comprehend, gesturing to the astuteness of women, who can more easily empathize. When Eliza is unwell and growing 'worse and worse' with a 'lingering complaint' (6), he only 'imagined his wife was only grown still more whimsical' (6).

In a similar way, Mary can excuse Ann's weaknesses because she is aware of the circumstances that formed her mind and heart.<sup>18</sup> The knowledge of Ann's past and ongoing pain excuses her later emotional inadequacy towards Mary. She is born to be loved, rather than to love, and she does not possess the emotional capacity to show deep affection to her friend. Yet her inability also draws attention to the lost potential of this friendship, and suggests a more optimistic future for women's relationships if they are educated. Ann has not cultivated or rationally analysed her own feelings to the point that she can be sympathetic, or understand her friend; the narrator explains: 'She had not found the companion she looked for. Ann and she were not congenial minds, nor did she contribute to her comfort in the degree she expected' (17). A large aspect of Mary's sadness surrounds her isolation from other women due to her emotional cultivation,<sup>19</sup> as well as her intellect which has informed her ability to be sympathetic. Mary is not like other women, but unusually active in her mind, and spends time reflecting on her feelings in a manner that Shaftesbury suggests.<sup>20</sup> The narrator explains that 'her mind was not like a mirror, which received every floating image, but does not retain them: she had not any prejudices, for every opinion was examined before it was adopted' (23).

*Mary* illustrates that it is women's education and past experiences that disallow their full potential to be realized. While this might seem an obvious point considering our intricate discussion of Hartley, we should remember that it was powerful enough to inspire Wollstonecraft's novel at this time, and enable her to present her case for women. Incidentally, it is significant within the novel that Mary always gains restoration, comfort or happiness from the women she helps.<sup>21</sup> Demonstrating this is her love of Ann. Not only does this relationship allow emotional renewal so she can 'feel less pain on account of her mother's partiality to her brother' (8), Wollstonecraft also gestures to its religious power, an idea of female-female love that is developed in *Maria*. The devotion Mary shows Ann has that element of eros that Taylor cites as fundamental for Wollstonecraft's imagining of the relationship between people and God.<sup>22</sup> Mary knows herself that she loves this woman more deeply than Henry: 'Mary did not choose to explain herself; had Ann lived, it is probable she would never have loved Henry so fondly; but if she had, she could not have talked of her passion to any human creature' (49).<sup>23</sup> This is a relationship that sees Mary wanting to heal her friend, and protect her as if she were a saviour figure. She confesses: 'to snatch her from the very jaws of destruction – she would have encountered a lion' (15). She travels with her abroad, and writes her husband a 'transcript of her heart' (19), much like a devotional prayer, informing him, 'I love her for her agreeable qualities, and substantial virtues' (19). Her dedication has that sacrificial aspect, which is so central to the Christian story. Mary reveals, 'I would die first!' rather than 'forsake' Ann by not travelling with her ascertain her recovery (20). Much like a disciple or pilgrim, she follows her friend, 'continually thinking of Ann's recovery' and like someone in prayer 'only thought of her' (22). Yet this is an especially female-embodied emotion, 'an affection very like a maternal one' (19). The sense of her 'maternal' affection gestures to the invisible, but deeply strong female-identified feeling that

bonds the two women.<sup>24</sup> It is undoubtable that this relationship gives Mary the courage, strength and the sense of purpose she needs to express her autonomy.

We should appreciate that despite the ultimate failure of Ann and Mary's relationship, the novel still refuses the superiority of the male-female bond. The charismatic and seemingly emotionally-sophisticated Henry is seen as totally inadequate as a substitute for this woman, because the narrator is ambivalent about the impact of male wisdom and male education on female autonomy. While Mary gains some happiness and intellectual stimulation from the men she encounters throughout the novel, the writer demonstrates her distrust of the male influence in two ways, both related to emotion: first, Mary has an obviously academic, well-informed approach to emotion which makes it stronger and most powerful without the male's presence; and second, the intellectual men Mary meets disappoint her emotionally, because their standards of morality are weak. These points are vital in accessing Wollstonecraft's growing faith in the female-female bond, and her valuation of female emotion as that which can be trusted to give wisdom. They also indicate the growing status of emotional cultivation in the late-eighteenth century, where Wollstonecraft's heroine engages with Hartlean/Priestlean debate to assert herself.

The narrator continually emphasizes the strong intellect and self-understanding that informs the heroine's emotions, and this emphasizes Mary's worth outside male influence. Moreover, the heroine is critical of those who can only appeal to the gross senses (53-54) and she relates sensibility to religion and reason, showing her own philosophical understanding of feeling:

Sensibility is the most exquisite feeling of which the human soul is susceptible: when it pervades us, we feel happy; and could it last unmixed, we might form some conjecture of the bliss of those paradisiacal days, when obedient passions were under the dominion of reason, and the impulses of the heart did not need correction. (53)

Here, Mary shows engagement with the Priestlean/Hartlean debates surrounding the origins and development of emotion, and positions herself against Priestley's materialist view that does not require the soul. This is a more Hartlean view of emotion however, which sees the heart as malleable through reason. In the novel, Mary refuses to believe that 'my soul is matter, and that its feelings arose from certain modifications of it' (40). She is committed to emotional freedom, and despite the novel's interest in the necessary formation of her character, these sentiments position Mary against the suggestion of the mechanical mind. As well as claiming her independence from male philosophy here, and believing in her own emotional personality, Mary is also clear in her aversion to men who profess their learning, but who are neither happy, nor virtuous. In England, the man she meets 'of polished manners, and dazzling wit [...] knew men, as well as books (54).<sup>25</sup> However, he is strongly criticized by her specifically because he holds ideas that are not grounded in example and lead him to be 'discontented' (55). Mary writes in conclusion to her 'train of reflections', that 'It is very difficult to discipline the mind of a thinker, or reconcile him to the weakness, the inconsistency of his understanding; and a still more laborious task for him to conquer his passions, and learn to seek content, instead of happiness' (56). She agrees with Hartley's way of thinking when she writes that 'Good dispositions, and virtuous propensities, without the light of the Gospel, produce eccentric characters: comet-like, they are always in extremes'

(56). This is a man who seeks the wrong type of happiness, which is sensual and self-focused, rather than being the Hartlean, generous happiness, that is selfless like God's.

In the same way, Henry was 'a man of learning' (27) and one whom with Mary feels 'she frequently discussed very important subjects' (27). As a figure well-versed in Hartlean/Priestlean theory, she is attracted the fact that she 'could not help thinking that in his company her mind expanded, as he always went below the surface. She increased her stock of ideas, and her taste was improved' (27). Henry gives Mary intellectual satisfaction, helping her to reach her academic potential. However, the author is clear that he also restricts Mary, by contributing to her relapse in emotional confidence. His emotionless, uncaring letters mean that: 'Her mind was then painfully active; she could not read or walk; she tried to fly from herself' (56). Later, Mary is deeply affected by a 'new instance of Henry's disinterested affection' and 'almost fainted' (63), a bodily reaction to mental suffering that causes her bad health. Mary is physically unwell due to her trauma and her nerves are described in Hartlean terms as tired of the painful emotions they have experienced: 'Mary visited the continent, and sought health in different climates; but her nerves were not to be restored to their former state' (67). Henry is located as the contributory factor to Mary's tragedy: 'Whenever she did, or said, any thing she thought Henry would have approved of – she could not avoid thinking with anguish, of the rapture his approbation ever conveyed to her heart' (67-68). This frustration at her dependence is repeated in her admission of her love: 'I could be happy listening to him, soothing his cares. – Would he not smile upon me – call me his own Mary? I am not his – said she with fierceness – I am his wretch!' (62).

The emotional invasion of Henry is obvious in her degradation. When Mary attempts to be private about her feelings of grief and plans to 'draw a veil over her wretched state of

mind' (38), Henry still penetrates her thoughts, and informs her: 'your mind is not in a state to be left to its own operations [...] I only think of your happiness' (39). He feels entitled to access Mary through his 'wisdom', telling her: 'Be not too hasty, my child [...] Our affection as well as our sentiments are fluctuating; you will not perhaps always either think or feel as you do at present: the object you now shun may appear in a different light' (39). This is a man who asks to be considered a father (35), a request which pleases Mary, but also has overtones of his desired authority. Considering this, there is a definite moment of triumph for Mary when she replies in Hartlean vocabulary to defend herself against his statements that she cannot be sure of her emotions. The heroine speaks of the necessity of her feelings:

My affections are involuntary – yet they can only be fixed by reflection, and when they are make quite a part of my soul, are interwoven in it, animate my actions, and form my taste: certain qualities are calculated to call forth my sympathies, and make me all I am capable of being. The governing affection gives its stamp to the rest – because I am capable of loving one, I have that kind of charity to all my fellow-creatures which is not easily provoked. Milton has asserted, that earthly love is the scale by which to heavenly we may ascend. (39)

Mary is confident in this retaliation that she can also assert herself through Hartlean theory. She understands the concept that one has a primary pleasure that the affections follow, and which dictates all actions; she also has faith in her love and its divine importance. Despite Henry's labelling of her as a 'Dear enthusiastic creature' she continues to explain that she understands her feelings well: 'in solitude were my sentiments formed; they are indelible, and nothing can efface them but death – No death itself cannot efface them, or my soul must be



created afresh, and not improved' (40); she knows that 'Every cause in nature produces an effect' and that only God is 'the Author of all Perfection – which leads me to conclude that he only can fill my soul' (40). Mary is presented as intellectual, religious and emotionally-sensitive, and she is able to assert these aspects of her character particularly eloquently by using Hartlean discourse and concepts. Considering her worth and this moment of authority, it is the heroine's tragedy that she diminishes towards the novel's end, lacking real faith in her identity.

### ***Original Stories: a Hartlean Mission and a Woman Inspiring Women's Emotional Perfection***

The children's book, *Original Stories*, was first published in 1788 and established Wollstonecraft's reputation as a pedagogical writer (Hilton 75).<sup>26</sup> The book was produced during a time when women were writing with increasing confidence as the 'nation's teachers',<sup>27</sup> who could educate the mind and morals of the next generation (Hilton 3). *Original Stories* was also Wollstonecraft's greatest commercial success, reprinted three times by Johnson in the 1790s, and carefully revised for the second edition in 1791 (where Blake's designs were included).<sup>28</sup> This second edition, to which I refer in this chapter, was particularly attractive to the middle-class progressive parent because of its 'originality [...] together with its striking illustrations' (Franklin 40). It provides a more positive feminist message than *Mary*, since the female characters are able to relate to each other, begin an important friendship, and develop aspirations that they go on to achieve. This text has its roots in Wollstonecraft's relationship with Margaret King, with whom she had a special

bond, and on whom she practiced her liberal views of education when she was governess in Ireland (Gordon 92-93). In *Original Stories*, emotion remains untouched by the male gaze or male intervention, where the young girls develop affectively only under wise female guidance.

As well as taking her role as a children's writer seriously,<sup>29</sup> Wollstonecraft's growing self-assurance in her views reflects her increased faith in women is related to her greater use of and exposure to Hartlean ideas when she wrote specifically for Joseph Johnson in London. The text depicts the relationship between the governess, Mrs Mason, and her two charges, the fourteen year-old Mary and twelve year-old Caroline. Although it is Taylor's view that 'the model of adult authority offered by *Original Stories*, in common with other texts in the genre, remained specifically and narrowly feminine' and that 'Mrs Mason [...] offers no challenge to male intellectual regimes [...] she is certainly no philosopher' (35), I suggest that Mrs Mason is the mouthpiece to Hartlean theory, and that this philosophy kindles the bond between the women because of its aspirational ethos. Furthermore, Mason's unconventional femininity reflects the intellectual culture's non-gendered aspirations for the person that sees men and women's bodies as equally open to development. Mason is a 'Hartlean figure' in her strong and unusual opinions that reflect so many of the philosopher's own, as well as in her intellect and emotional depth that has benefited from cultivation: her expressions of feeling are always moderate, and while she is upheld as the emblem of kindness, virtue and piety, she is 'never in a passion' (388). At the same time, Mason is reminiscent of the real Mason with whom Wollstonecraft worked at her school in Newington Green. Gordon explains the character of this woman, 'The study "Mason" (as Wollstonecraft called her) had a "clearness of judgement" not overburdened with sensibility. Her bluntness was wholesome, not wounding. The Wollstonecraft sisters talked of Mason long after she left the school in July

1785' (41). That the sisters, and especially Wollstonecraft, were attracted to such a figure points towards the types of women thought to be inspirational at this time.

In the stories, Mason's lessons are severe in order to shock the girls into feeling compassion, remorse and benevolence. At the very beginning of the collection Mason tells the children a story of guinea pigs that are tortured and finally killed,<sup>30</sup> and she kills a dying creature in front of them in order to teach mercy (369). Such violence to teach morality and virtue resonates with the horror of the fairy tale tradition, although Ralph Wardle labels Mason a 'heartless virago' (88), and McMillen Conger agrees that her teaching practices are 'difficult to read as acts of fellow-feeling' (77). While understanding these scholars' views, by reading Mrs Mason within the cultural context described in the introduction, we can understand her overriding motives of refining their emotions for these girls' development. The Hartlean tone of the text in this regard is obvious from its full title: *Original Stories from Real Life; with Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections, and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness*. The writer is explicit in her desire to re-shape the mind of her readers through re-training their emotions. In the case of the protagonists, Mary and Caroline, the reader witnesses their development from being 'shamefully ignorant' and with 'troublesome' natures (361), to becoming, in Mrs Mason's words, 'now candidates for my friendship' (449).

Unlike Wollstonecraft's previous fiction that ultimately accepted and tolerated women's inadequacy, *Original Stories* is significant because Mrs Mason confronts the girls' weakness, and teaches them how to change and reach perfection. This Hartlean state of excellence is similarly grounded on the idea of emotional refinement and the shifting of pleasure into that which the benevolent God approves. Mrs Mason tells the girls:

You feel [emotions that incite you to do good]; [and] painful ones disturb you, when you [have resisted the faithful internal monitor]. The wiser, and the better you [grow], the more visible, if I may use the expression, [will God become:] for wisdom consists in searching Him out, and goodness in endeavouring to copy his attributes. (423)

In her sense that a person should aspire to the virtues of God, Mrs Mason reflects the liberal Hartlean culture that was inclusive and supportive of all people's development. In the very first chapter, Mrs Mason concludes by telling the girls 'Look, what a fine morning it is [...] Thank God for permitting you to see it, and for giving you an understanding which teaches you that you ought, by doing good, to imitate Him' (370). Throughout the stories, Mrs Mason refers to God, also implying that without his presence, people could not achieve greatness: chapter XV states, 'To attain any thing great, a model must be held up to [exercise] our understanding, and engage our affections. A view of the disinterestedness goodness of God is [therefore] calculated to touch us more than can be conceived by a depraved mind' (423); furthermore, 'We are his children [when] we try to resemble Him' (431). This is a radical image that tells young women they can aspire to God's perfection, and need only possess the idea of his goodness to inspire their actions.

In the Preface to the children's book, Wollstonecraft expresses her teaching methodology in Hartlean terms, showing allegiance to a Hartlean way of thinking, and giving *Original Stories* philosophical authority behind its interest to alter the mind and heart. The author complains of the tendency for writers to be expected to use reason to 'cure the faults [...] which ought never have taken root in the infant mind' (359), because it is her view that: 'Good habits, imperceptibly fixed' are always 'preferable to the precepts of reason' (359);

this reveals her Hartlean belief that experiences are more powerful in forming a child's mind, than intellectual arguments, since 'reason with difficulty, conquers settled habits, even when it is arrived at some degree of maturity' (359). Wollstonecraft concludes in this regard: 'why then do we suffer children to be bound with fetters, which their half-formed faculties cannot break' (359). Such an image is powerful in expressing the special nature of children's minds that are so open to development and experience, and must have the freedom to grow. It also centralizes the emotions as the moral compass, which should first be formed with the help of adults.

Considering the malleable nature of the human mind, education then is necessarily emotional as well as an intellectual; this explains the emotional nature of the stories, which are designed to impact affectively on young readers to change their ways of thinking. Yet Wollstonecraft is sensitive to the variability of emotions between different generations, so she accepts that it is still necessary to give knowledge before understanding is fully achieved: 'But to wish that parents would, themselves, mould the ductile passions, is a chimerical wish, for the present generation have their own passions to combat with, and fastidious pleasures to pursue', however, 'we must [therefore] pour premature knowledge into the succeeding one; and, teaching virtue, explain the nature of vice' (359). This idea of giving children 'premature knowledge' resonates with *Observations on Man*. Hartley expects personal understanding to be realized only through the body's own suffering and pleasure, even if he offers detailed and reasoned arguments about virtue and which pleasures are the 'Rule of Life'. Like Hartley, Wollstonecraft believes in the power of experiences on the body to shape the emotions, stating specifically that:

[K]nowledge should be gradually imparted, and flow more from example than teaching: example directly addresses the senses, the first [inlets] to the heart; [and the improvement of those instruments of the understanding is the] object of education should have constantly in view, and over which we have most power. (361)

This is a particularly Hartlean view of the senses that understands their role in forming a moral code and cultivating emotion. These ‘inlets to the heart’ have a special value for education, which must be directed towards them.

According to this end, each of the stories presents scenarios to touch the feelings of the reader, especially by depicting scenes of others’ suffering. Like Hartley, the author suggests that the association between pleasure and performing acts of benevolence must be developed by choice. As Mrs Mason says in the last chapter: ‘you have already *felt* the pleasure of doing good; ever recollect that [the wild pursuits of] fancy must be conquered’ (449). This implies the power of the body in encouraging habits, but recognizes this must be sustained by effort. Such a view of benevolence and virtue is democratic, since it disclaims its inherence, and argues for its achievability being dependent on choice. Like Hartley, Mrs Mason works on the premise that actions will specifically create associations in the mind, with corresponding emotions felt in the body.

The stories involving animals are the most effective in terms of evoking emotion and shifting the girls’ feelings of pleasure to benevolence. This is part of a wider cultural shift apparent in the late Romantic period that was interested in animal rights and vegetarianism, and Hartley can be seen as a precursor to these ideas in his own advocacy of animal welfare and the ‘vegetable diet’. The opening scene of chapter one immediately forefronts the girls’

disregard for animal welfare as an indication of their moral and emotional inadequacy. The girls' behaviour also reinforces the point that kindness and benevolence is something to be learned and felt. Mrs Mason silently observes Mary and Caroline's 'cruel sports', as they 'run eagerly after some insects to destroy them' (367); rather than telling the girls of their error, she avoids treading on some snails in her path to show by example that animals should be protected. The girls scorn her attempts to protect the creatures and laugh. In response Mrs Mason explains that goodness is 'to avoid hurting any thing; and then, to contrive to give it as much pleasure as you can' (368);<sup>31</sup> more than this she wishes the girls to think of animals in Hartlean terms, as alike to human beings and with correspondent feelings.<sup>32</sup> To do this, she sets up the comparison between animals and themselves: 'God cares for them, and gives them every thing that is necessary to render their existence comfortable. You are often troublesome – I am stronger than you – but I do not kill you' (368). This encourages the girls' emotions of sympathy with animals, but the lesson is instilled by Mason through giving them a real experience: at the end of their walk the children see some injured birds suffering. The small knowledge they have been given and the emotions it evoked allows them to change in their behaviour, and only then do they instinctively find pleasure in cherishing the creatures:

Caroline remarked, that nestlings, deprived of their parents, would now perish. The girls, with one voice, begged Mrs. Mason to let them take the nest, and provide food in a cage, and see if the mother could not contrive to hop about to feed them. The nest and the old mother were instantly in Mary's handkerchief. A little opening was left to admit the air; and Caroline peeped into it every moment to see how they looked. (369)

When they later choose to rescue the nest of another bird from a child who is keen to destroy it, their ‘hearts now first felt the emotions of humanity’ and Mrs Mason praises them for acting like ‘rational creatures’ (370). The governess’ way of educating the girls through giving them opportunities to act themselves, offers a model for how parents can educate their own children. Experiences are proven to work more deeply on the emotions than reason. The narrator demonstrates that children need regular impressions on the senses to foster new attitudes; this is obvious when Caroline’s behaviour deteriorates shortly after meeting with a suffering woman who does not have enough money to feed her family: ‘After the impression [which] the story, and the sight of the family had made, was a little worn off, Caroline begged leave to buy one toy, and then another, till her money was [quite gone]’ (444). Although this reinforces the idea that benevolence is learned through real physical encounters and practise, rather than reasoning (just as Hartley says), Wollstonecraft has faith in the power of literature and the imagination to cultivate the emotions, since her stories rely on the readers’ experience of the text in fostering their moral development.

That Wollstonecraft assumes the power of literature to induce feeling and so initiate change is reason for the detail in Chapter IV’s ‘The History of Jane Fretful’. Again, this example surrounds the treatment of animals, where humans’ attitude towards them also reflects their morality and emotional cultivation. The tale of Jane depicts her inevitable cruelty to her pet dog when ‘Continual passions’ had so ‘weakened’ her ‘constitution’ (381) that she could never even feel happiness (382). Jane becomes a woman without a friend, and her lonely existence is related to the most disturbing moment in the story when she accidentally kills her pregnant dog and its babies through her uncontrollable anger:



For some time she fondled, and really felt something like an affection for it: but, one day, it happened to snatch a cake she was going to eat, and though there were twenty within reach, she flew into a violent passion, and threw a stool at the poor creature, who was big with pup. It fell down; I can scarcely tell the rest; it received so severe a blow, that all the young were killed, and the poor wretch languished two days, suffering the most excruciating torture. (381)

The parting words of Mrs Mason to the girls are ‘Avoid anger; exercise compassion; and love truth. Recollect, that from religion your chief comfort must spring’ (449). This religious approach to life that includes a high regard for God’s nature is present from the beginning of the collection, where Mrs Mason enforces respect and compassion for animals especially because: ‘You have already heard that God created the entire world, and every inhabitant of it. He is then called the Father of all creatures; and all are made to be happy [whom a good and wise God has created]’ (368). This is a Hartlean fusion of emotional and educational theory, ethics and religion, which sees God as wholly benevolent and the exemplar of human behaviour. Mrs Mason forwards a Hartlean understanding of creation that enables the children to be compassionate to all that is sacred to God, especially because of the difference between animals and humans. In the same way as Hartley, she emphasizes humans’ privilege: ‘Animals have not the affections which arise from reason, nor can they do good, or acquire virtue. Every affection, and impulse, [which] I have observed in them, are like our inferior [emotions]’, which do not depend entirely on our will, but are involuntary’ (372). The way in which animals are used to appeal to children’s moral understanding and religiosity is reminiscent of Barbauld’s *Hymns in Prose for Children*, which were similarly inspired by Hartlean theory (McCarthy and Kraft 235). Wollstonecraft extends the Hartlean connotations, when she uses *Original Stories* to highlight humans’ subsequent duty to self-improvement

because of animals: 'Other creatures only think of supporting themselves; but man is allowed to ennoble his nature, by cultivating his mind and enlarging his heart' (370). She makes the comparison increasingly religious to encourage the children's benevolence and faith: 'men are inferior to angels; yet we have reason to believe that those exalted beings delight to do us good' (371).

The author is explicit that virtue has implications for the next life, so practising goodness entails 'every benevolent affection to enjoy comfort here, and to fit ourselves to be angels hereafter. [And] when we have acquired human virtues, we shall have a nobler employment in our Father's kingdom' (371-372). By endorsing the religious value of an emotional and moral education, female learning and women's emotional sophistication is made absolutely necessary. These comments assume women's increased status in the afterlife; this is another point made by Hartley, but much more emphasized in Wollstonecraft's work, reflecting her own cultural moment that was attentive to women's rights and spiritual worth. The religious inflection of the writing is used to empower women, suggesting that they are duty-bound to establish themselves above animals as 'rational creatures' and potential angels. This was not an argument that interested Hartley, whose focus was often mostly centred on men and adults. Mrs Mason is explicit that to attain the state of angels, children must be kind to animals. This Hartlean message of benevolence is put into a context that children can understand and achieve:

The children eagerly enquired in what manner they were to behave, to prove that they were superior to animals? The answer was short – be tender-hearted; and let your superior endowments ward off the [evils] [which] they cannot foresee. It is only to animals that children

can do good; men are their superiors. When I was a child, added their tender friend, I always made it my study and delight to feed all the dumb family [that surrounded our house]; and when I could be of use to any one of them I was happy. This employment humanized my heart, while, like wax, it took every impression; and Providence has since made me an instrument of good – I have been useful to my fellow creatures. (371-372)

Mrs Mason concludes these remarks by stating, ‘This world, I told you, was a road to a better – a preparation for it; if we suffer, we grow humbler and wiser’ (373). The sense of the heart as ‘like wax’ and sensitive to ‘every impression’ highlights the importance of children’s malleability. Hartlean theory had presupposed the mind and brain’s malleability, and Wollstonecraft transposes this interest to instead focus on the symbolic role of malleable heart.

However like Hartley, the religious ramifications of emotion make its cultivation deeply serious for Wollstonecraft. The Preface establishes a particularly Hartlean understanding of religion as ‘an active, invigorating director of the affections, and not a mere attention to forms’ (359). This is because while ‘Systems of Theology may be complicated [...] the character of the Supreme Being is displayed, and He is recognised [sic] as the Universal Father, the Author and Centre of Good’ (360). This means that ‘a child may be led to comprehend that dignity and happiness must arise from imitating Him’ (360). These sentiments resound with Hartley’s own religio-emotional ethos of self-improvement and universal happiness coming from God, who each person can imitate. As such, we can see how Hartlean ideas that were reflected in the culture are utilized to endorse the promotion of women in intellectual, religious and moral terms. Emotional cultivation requires

understanding, and Mrs Mason reiterates to her students, that ‘Every gift of Heaven is lent to us for our improvement’ (415). Fostering one’s own likeness to God and the pleasure of the approbation of the moral sense is presented as the goal, which in keeping with the Hartlean concept of the scale of perfection. Mrs Mason says, in the language of *Observations*:

The Supreme Being has every thing in himself; we proceed from Him, and our knowledge and affections must return to Him for employment suited to them. And those who most resemble Him ought, next to Him, to be the objects of our love; and the beings [whom] we should try to associate with, that we may receive an inferior degree of satisfaction from their society. But be assured, our chief comfort [must] ever arise from the mind’s reviewing its own operations – and the whispers of [an approving] conscience, [to convince us] that life has not slipped away unemployed. (415)

The elevation of those who are Godlike also promotes the three classes of pleasures most relevant to Hartley in achieving Perfection: the pleasures of theopathy, the pleasures of sympathy, and the pleasures of the moral sense. Mrs Mason asks the young women to search for people who share God’s loving nature; yet her overriding point is still that individuals must aspire to greatness themselves.

The female-female bond is stronger in *Original Stories* than the preceding texts, and the strength and depiction of the teacher-student relationship drives the stories’ success. While the love explored is not erotic (and there is no erotic bond depicted in this text), the love between Mason and her charges is deep and includes the younger girls’ adoration of their mentor. This reminds us of the intense and affectionate bond that Wollstonecraft shared

with Margaret King, to whom she continued to write in secret after leaving her post as governess. As an adult, Margaret claimed about Wollstonecraft: ‘almost the only person of superior merit with whom I had been intimate in my early days was an enthusiastic female who was my governess [...] for whom I felt an unbounded admiration because her mind appeared more noble & her understanding more cultivated than any others I had known’ (Todd 102). In *Original Stories*, the state of the girls at the beginning of the text demonstrates the theory of association in action since their minds, nearing adulthood, have been moulded by their lack of experience thus depriving them of a sophisticated emotional (and therefore ethical) sense. Mary and Caroline lived alone with their father and ‘had caught every prejudice that the vulgar casually instill’ (361). The father’s inability to properly educate or control his daughters is significant, and develops the suggestion from *The Cave of Fancy* and *Mary* that the female-female bond has a special potential to restore, inspire and rescue women. Such a message will be fully explored in *Maria*. In this case, Mrs Mason is the saviour, and rather than accepting or condoning the girls’ various weaknesses, she has continually high expectations, informed by Hartlean theory. Caroline refers to the woman as ‘her true friend’ (445) at the end of the collection; as another woman, Mrs Mason does not accept any faults as somehow natural to the female sex, and she sees the girls as equal to their male counterparts and therefore able to cultivate themselves. In turn, the girls gradually learn to meet her high standards.<sup>33</sup> When in Chapter XIII, Mrs Mason directly exposes them to people’s poverty and suffering, she does so in order that they can ‘act for once like women’ (445) by showing benevolence to another person. By the end of the story, Mary and Caroline reach their potential, having fostered their ability to be selfless.

Unlike the heroine from *Mary* who was misunderstood by her female companion, Mrs Mason is upheld and respected especially because of her uncommon femininity. Rather than

having to be accepted, she inspires affection in the girls who wish to be like her. Mary says of her teacher ‘I am afraid of Mrs Mason’s eyes – would you think, Caroline, that she who looks so very good-natured sometimes could frighten one so? I wish I were as wise and as good as she is [...] I wish to be a woman [...] and to be like Mrs Mason’ (389). The comment testifies to the power of the female-female relationship, where only another woman can ignite women’s self-respect and ambition. Mrs Mason’s presence in the stories is significant since it shows Wollstonecraft’s commitment to imagining the potential of the female-female bond in particular. This is a deeply intense and specifically female connection that is analogous to the other female-female relationships we see depicted in Wollstonecraft’s work. In this collection, there is an absence of any male figure with philosophical knowledge or expectations that can excite the girls’ ambition or affection. Rather, Mrs Mason is their saviour and inspiration. She uses a Hartlean model of education to initiate their emotional cultivation, and imparts the knowledge they require that will make them aspire to God’s perfection.

### ***A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: Women’s Religion, their Perfectibility, and the Theory of Association***

*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* continues to assert the writer’s belief in women’s capacity to reach perfection. In particular the text emphasizes women’s duty to improve themselves. Wollstonecraft’s arguments have a particularly Hartlean inflection, allowing them to be religious, but equally grounded on the theory of association and a valuation of emotional refinement. An extract from chapter one establishes the philosophical nature of the

piece, where the articulation of numerous Hartlean ideas in succession gestures to the Hartlean culture in 1792 that would have been familiar to a late-eighteenth century readership:

[I]f benignity itself thought fit to call into existence a creature above the brutes, who could think and improve himself, why should that inestimable gift, for a gift it was, if a man was so created as to have a capacity to rise above the state in which sensation produced brutal ease, be called, in direct terms, a curse? A curse it might be reckoned, if all our existence was bounded by our continuance in this world; for why should the gracious fountain of life give us passions, and the power of reflecting, only to embitter our days, and inspire us with mistaken notions of dignity? Why should he lead us from love of ourselves to the sublime emotions which the discovery of his wisdom and goodness excites, if these feelings were set in motion to improve our nature, of which they make a part, and render us capable of enjoying a more godlike portion of happiness? (*Rights of Woman* 22-23)

In this section Hartlean ideas include: the author's suggestion that a belief in God's goodness should excite particular feelings and actions; the possibility for people to share God's happiness; the duty each person has to practise and achieve emotional refinement; an appreciation for the human's privileged relationship to animals (allowing them to rise about the pleasures of sensation); finally, the subsequent reality of immortality and the duty of self-improvement this implies. Although Wollstonecraft refers to many of these ideas throughout the text, her most powerful feminist arguments use three Hartlean concepts in particular: first, Wollstonecraft establishes the importance of 'perfectibility' or self-improvement; second, the

value of emotion and its cultivation for this growth towards excellence is suggested; lastly, the writer argues that only past impressions and associations create women's moral ideas, their intellect and expectations. These concepts, which aim to advance women's progression, also capture Hartley's own democratic Christian ethos and give *Vindications* status as a religious, philosophical and feminist project.

The concept of perfectibility is just as vital for Wollstonecraft's feminism as it is for Hartley's religio-scientific message, and she situates herself firmly within a Hartlean/religious worldview that looks forward to, and hopes to facilitate, the restoration of every individual to his or her divine state. What Wollstonecraft calls 'my old argument' refers to her belief that 'if woman be allowed to have an immortal soul, she must have, as the employment of life, an understanding to improve' (IV), and in this way, education is implicitly made a spiritual right, since 'the first step to form a being advancing gradually towards perfection', is not merely 'preparation for life' (69), but rather has implications for life after death. Wollstonecraft's strong belief in the afterlife and her faith in women's perfectibility mutually support each other, giving the author the confidence to argue for women's right to self-improvement. She writes in particular that 'The stamen of immortality, if I may be allowed the phrase, is the perfectibility of human reason; for, were man created perfect, or did a flood of knowledge break in upon him, when he arrived at maturity, that precluded error, I should doubt whether his existence would be continued after the dissolution of the body' (69).<sup>34</sup> Wollstonecraft might use the masculine pronoun here, but this does not aim to preclude women from this important argument that instead poses human beings' ability (and desire) to improve because of their common immortality.



Wollstonecraft develops these claims in order to redress the ideology surrounding women, which disparages them as sensual, non-spiritual or non-intellectual beings: 'I cannot understand why, unless they are mortal, females should always be degraded by being made subservient to love or lust' (38), 'to their senses, are women made slaves' (79). Important here is how the writer's religious outlook for immortality and spiritual equality informs her feminism. In direct opposition to ideas that would denigrate women to the physical and quantifiable, Wollstonecraft utilizes her religious ideas to once again attack materialist accounts of the person: 'I discern not a trace of the image of God in either sensation or matter' (81). Her proclaimed distaste for wholly sensationalist accounts of the human is striking in how it shows preference for Hartley's synthesis of spirituality, theory, morality and the latest ideas about anatomy despite the growing acceptance of atheistic/deistic feeling and materialism. Wollstonecraft is happy to avoid a secular approach to her political ideas. She argues that 'the nature of reason must be the same in all, if it be an emanation of divinity, the tie that connects the creature with the Creator; for, can that soul be stamped with the heavenly image, that is not perfected by the exercise of its own reason' (69). These references present an author participating in popular philosophical debates, but taking a position against a Priestlean view of the body as one substance. Like Hartley, she combines traditional religious ideas with new theories to demonstrate how they coexist.

For both Hartley and Wollstonecraft, emotion and understanding have a symbiotic relationship, yet there is the underlying conviction that emotion is the more powerful means to reaching perfection and understanding. Religious arguments are also used to portray emotion as the vital resource for self-improvement, and Wollstonecraft unifies faith, emotion and reason as equal and related: 'that wise Being who created us and placed us here [...] willed, by allowing it to be so, that the passions should unfold our reason' (21).

Wollstonecraft reiterates the importance of feeling in the text, explaining that ‘the heart, as well as the understanding, is opened by cultivation’ (85), and she sees the heart as having a role in refining moral behaviour. In her view, ‘A cultivated understanding, and an affectionate heart, will never want starched rules of decorum’ (123). Showing her faith in emotion’s greater potential, she writes that ‘I contend that the heart would expand as the understanding gained strength, if women were not depressed from their cradles’ (235). In order to empower emotion, Wollstonecraft compares it to understanding in these examples, and she later employs philosophical vocabulary to explain its value: ‘The understanding, it is true, may keep us from going out of drawing when we group our thoughts, or transcribe from the imagination the warm sketches of fancy; but the animal spirits, the individual character, give the colouring’ (145). She continues this discussion directly, in more Hartlean terms, referring to ‘this subtle electric fluid’, over which ‘how little power do we possess, and over it how little power can reason obtain!’ (145). The reference to this ‘fluid’ and ‘animal spirits’ recognizes the power of emotions to enliven a person and dictate actions and thought where reason may only register them. Wollstonecraft writes a footnote about the ‘fluid’, and in so doing, reveals her complex view of materialism:

I have sometimes, when inclined to laugh at materialists, asked whether, as the most powerful effects in nature, are apparently produced by fluids, the magnetic, &c. the passions might not be fine volatile fluids that embraced humanity, keeping the more refractory elementary parts together-or whether they were simply a liquid fire that pervaded the more sluggish materials, giving them life and heat? (145)

In this explanation, Wollstonecraft argues that materialism always relies on the imagination, fluids, and the even more elusive ‘magnetism’ referenced by Hartley. In this way she asserts her belief in the passions as the most powerful causes of human vitality and rehabilitates materialism as more complex than has been conceived.

For Wollstonecraft, emotional cultivation can be facilitated by those of heightened sensibility: ‘the glowing minds that concentrate pictures for their fellow-creatures; forcing them to view with interest the objects reflected from the impassioned imagination, which they passed over in nature’ (145). This is important because it promotes the potential of women’s emotion to be refined. In the author’s view, women need to cultivate their emotions if they are to achieve sexual equality, since, as we saw in *The Cave of Fancy* and *Mary*, emotion has direct impact on the institution of marriage:

Were women more rationally educated, could they take a more comprehensive view of things, they would be contented to love but once in their lives; and after marriage calmly let passion subside into friendship – into that tender intimacy, which is the best refuge from care; yet is built on such pure, still affections, that idle jealousies would not be allowed to disturb the discharge of the sober duties of life, or to engross the thoughts that ought to be otherwise employed. This is a state in which many men live; but few, very few women. (149)

The cultivation of emotional feelings within the erotic bond also has spiritual ramifications, where both philosopher and feminist writer see love between humans as a pattern of the love to be exchanged between God and the individual. On this view, religion is an affective system and a way of life based on active benevolence, where love is constantly

and inevitably reflected back and forth between God (who is the source) and his people (who can only find happiness through him); love and affection are ‘built on humanity’ first, and then directed towards God;<sup>35</sup> she quotes 1 John 4:19-21: ‘He who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God? asked the wisest of men’ (134). While God is always the source of love ‘earthly affection turns back, at intervals, to prey upon the heart that feeds it’ (200). Therefore, by limiting women’s ability to enjoy equal and respectful relationships romantically, they do not have the capacity to practise the love and devotion they should feel for and from God. This negative view of marriage as that which has potential to be spiritually damaging, gestures to the special nature of the female-female bond, which has more opportunity of being based on equality.

More specifically than this, emotion (however difficult to define) is vital because it is the means by which associations are created.<sup>36</sup> *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* accounts for women’s differences through association in an especially Hartlean sense: referring to the impressions they receive on their bodies. This makes Wollstonecraft’s feminist message particularly Hartlean and revolutionary because she utilizes the theory of association to assume women’s greater potential. Wollstonecraft wishes to demonstrate explicitly that past impressions are by far the most powerful cause of character, and in her chapter entitled ‘The Effect Which An Early Association of Ideas has Upon the Character’ (144-150), she draws on the theory to endorse her feminism. The influence of Hartlean philosophy on this culture is evident where Wollstonecraft emphasizes that women’s lack of wisdom and poor self-perception is only entrenched by past impressions on the senses, rather than being the result of pre-existent disposition. To forward her argument, she displays her knowledge of the process of association and emphasizes that initial associations are made outside of the person’s control.<sup>37</sup> She then re-asserts her argument made during the Preface to

*Original Stories* that the formation of the person's mind is dependent on their early impressions and associations (rather than innate personality); as such, strengthening the understanding or gaining an education is less powerful in shaping a person emotionally:

So ductile is the understanding, and yet so stubborn, that the associations which depend on adventitious circumstances, during the period that the body takes to arrive at maturity, can seldom be disentangled by reason. One idea calls up another, its old associate, and memory, faithful to the first impressions, particularly when the intellectual powers are not employed to cool our sensations, retraces them with mechanical exactness. (145)<sup>38</sup>

Wollstonecraft highlights the body's role in determining and moulding the character where body and mind are unwilling to reorganize ideas because the memory is committed to its physical nature and 'mechanical exactness'. She uses the theory to state: 'Is it surprising, when we consider what a detrimental effect an early association of ideas has on the character, that they [women] neglect their understandings, and turn all their attention to their persons?' (144). The passage resonates strongly with Hartley's own language, and is far more powerful than the earlier Preface in *Mary* where these points were only gestured at:

Education thus only supplies the man of genius with knowledge to give variety and contrast to his associations; but there is an habitual association of ideas, that grows 'with our growth,' which has a great effect on the moral character of mankind; and by which a turn is given to the mind that commonly remains throughout life. (145)

This also corroborates more powerfully the author's earlier assertion in *Rights of Woman* that 'men and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in' (30). Wollstonecraft accounts for gendered behaviours in a specifically corporeal sense that relates to Hartley's understanding of association. Here she recognizes that association affects the body, organs, emotions and intellect:

Every thing that they see or hear serves to fix impressions, call forth emotions, and associate ideas, that give a sexual character to the mind. False notions of beauty and delicacy stop the growth of their limbs and produce a sickly soreness, rather than delicacy of organs; and thus weakened by being employed in unfolding instead of examining the first associations, forced on them by every surrounding object, how can they attain the vigour necessary to enable them to throw off their factitious character? (146)

The author is adamant that character is developed through one's first experiences on the senses, making childhood-experiences fundamental.<sup>39</sup> Having appreciated what she had called the 'mechanical exactness' of association (another Hartlean reference), Wollstonecraft alludes to 'This habitual slavery, to first impressions' (145) a reference which implies association's potentially dangerous nature. This view is corroborated when she refers to association's 'more baneful effect on the female than the male character' (145). Yet significantly, this is not to do with women's weaker minds or bodies, but is in fact caused by men having 'business and other dry employments of the understanding [...] to deaden the feelings and break associations that do violence to reason' (145). This text is a vital one for

portraying women as potentially perfect beings, whose religious, moral and intellectual capabilities must be fostered for their happiness and spiritual-welfare.

### ***Maria* Part I: A Novel Empowering Women's Bodily Emotion and Rejecting Masculine Control**

In her later writing, Wollstonecraft becomes increasingly inspired by her own female body, and more confident in finding ways to write specifically as a woman, and with a feminist agenda. For this reason Tauchert views Wollstonecraft's writing in terms of its gradual liberation from masculinized and transgendered subjectivity (13).<sup>40</sup> She explains: 'Wollstonecraft consciously writes "as a man" in spite of her female-embodiment, until the experience of pregnancy and birth reintroduces the figure of a potent and creative maternal body as an available presence in her writings' (13). In this sense, Tauchert recognizes a shift in Wollstonecraft's work in 1793 when she is pregnant:

Wollstonecraft's writings follow a trajectory of evident 'violent foreclosure' of the maternal body, and of any positive identification with the mother, reaching its apex in her *Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution* (1793), in which the writer's own pregnant body refuses to be foreclosed by the disembodied rational text. Until this moment, Wollstonecraft writes through a series of negative engagements with female-embodiment, largely marked by her renunciation of it and all its paraphernalia in the guises of femininity, answered by its displaced return in – and substitution by – the body of her writings. (12)

Tauchert's analysis is particularly enlightening, since it reveals how the writer reflected on her own experiences of being a woman as she wrote her work.<sup>41</sup> Building on this research, the shift in Wollstonecraft's way of thinking in 1793 about women and the female body can also be related to the Hartlean culture of the 1790s. *Maria* is important in illuminating the effects of this development since it expresses the culmination of Wollstonecraft's intellectually-informed feminism, combined with her own experiences of being a woman. Not only were Godwin and Hays reading Hartley in the 1790s, but the text was still receiving attention from Priestley and Johnson, so we can appreciate its close connection to Wollstonecraft and the intellectual interests of the Johnson circle.

The writer's intellectual growth is particularly clear when we compare the declared aims of *Mary* with those of *Maria*. While the earlier novel claimed to analyse the mind of woman, the Preface to *Maria* owns an interest in emotion, the female experience, and the body: 'In writing this novel. I have rather endeavoured to pourtray [sic] passions than manners [...] the history ought rather to be considered, as of woman, than of an individual. The sentiments I have embodied' (73). This reference to 'passions' and their being 'embodied' in the narrator, suggests the writer's dedication to analysing physical experience on an emotionally-receptive body. Furthermore, 'woman' is distinguished from 'man', revealing Wollstonecraft's dedication to highlighting the implications of sexual difference. While Hartley's view of the human is not a purposefully patriarchal one, as Moira Gatens observes: 'It is the male body, and its historically and culturally determined powers and capabilities, that is taken as the norm or standard of the liberal individual' (Tauchert 53). *Maria* addresses the specificity of the female experience, showing awareness of this same



point, and in the preface the author frames the text as interested to display the theory of association in terms of women, in order to challenge ideology about them:

In many works of this species, the hero is allowed to be moral, and to become wise and virtuous as well as happy, by a train of events and circumstances. The heroines, on the contrary, are to be born immaculate; and to act like goddess of wisdom, just come forth highly finished Minervas from the head of Jove. (73)

*Maria* resolves many of the under-developed ideas in earlier work, and is seen by Kinsley and Kelly as a 'revision' of *Mary* because the later novel 'extends its predecessor's exploration of the problem of sensibility' (xviii). They state: 'If *Mary* had been a compendium of ideas and attitudes of the age of Sensibility, the new novel was to epitomize the New Philosophy' (xvi). Interestingly the editors argue that *Maria* was inspired by how Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) provided a fictionalized account of his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), and in the same way, these editors see the novel *Maria* as a fictionalized account of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (xvi). Wollstonecraft self-consciously re-explores her main feminist themes, continually seeking to better express and understand her own ideas. The language resonating with *Observations on Man*, her faith, and the use of the theories of association and necessity facilitate her feminism and philosophical confidence. We should also consider the personal experiences that Wollstonecraft had between writing *Mary* and *Maria*. Most relevant is her love and passion for Gilbert Imlay whom she met in 1793. Amongst the climate of radicalism and reform, Imlay captivated Wollstonecraft's attention because of his idealism: he aimed to begin a new utopia in

America,<sup>42</sup> he had feminist sentiments, feelings against marriage, and a strong aversion to the slave trade. Wollstonecraft described him as her ‘most worthy man’ (Wollstonecraft qtd Gordon 203) and loved him enough to admit ‘Whilst you love me [...] I cannot again fall into the miserable state, which rendered life a burden almost too heavy to be borne’ (203).

Imlay’s identity enveloped Wollstonecraft’s own. When the two became lovers, he allowed Wollstonecraft to take his name and nationality for her protection in France. Such was her love that even when she became aware of his commercial interests, which included use of slaves from the West Indies, Wollstonecraft’s priority was to protect the sacred bond she believed they shared. Her pregnancy and the birth of their daughter Fanny (1794) enabled her to experience the unexpected pleasures of motherly devotion alongside her passion. This experience is clear in *Maria*. The love that Wollstonecraft felt for Fanny certainly shaped the feelings that she went on to describe in her literature. She said of her role as the child’s parent: ‘I feel great pleasure at being a mother – and the constant tenderness of my most affectionate companion makes me regard a fresh tie as a blessing’ (Wollstonecraft qtd Gordon 230). Soon after having given birth to Fanny, however, Wollstonecraft learned that Imlay was being unfaithful; the devastation she felt led her to attempt suicide. This event, and her use of laudanum, is recreated in *Maria*. Wollstonecraft’s next suicide attempt in 1795 resulted in her stating simply to the unfaith partner: ‘Your treatment has thrown my mind into a state of chaos’ (282). Wollstonecraft never felt her heart had recovered from Imlay, and it was the re-telling of her troubles, injustices and feelings in her *Travels* that led to Godwin’s interest in forging a friendship in 1796.

While later scholars and her own contemporaries depicted her as unrestrained, immoral or radical in her love affairs, Wollstonecraft was equally a dedicated and loyal

companion, committed to monogamy and whose first sexual encounter was not until her thirties. In terms of *Maria*, and perhaps owing to such readings of the uninhibited Wollstonecraft, Wendy Gunther-Canada argues that ‘In creating Maria, a heroine who linked women’s sexual liberation to the larger goals of political liberty, Wollstonecraft was a woman ahead of her time’ (168). This understanding of the novel as somehow futuristic sees the book emerging from a particularly forward-thinking individual. Yet it was the cultural moment that lent itself to Wollstonecraft burgeoning feminist and liberal ideas, and it is difficult to imagine the novel appearing earlier. According to Godwin, *Maria* occupied her for over a year before her death (Gunther-Canada 204). While the story has a similar narrative to *Mary*, there is greater attention to the validity of the heroine’s feelings, and the text is more concerned to demonstrate women’s strength and the injustices they face. The novel follows the heroine’s love story where an intense bond with a woman occurs alongside the heroine’s fascination for a charismatic man. When Maria is first introduced in chapter one, she is incarcerated in an asylum and described in particularly Hartlean vocabulary, which distinguishes her heightened sensibility:

Maria sat, endeavouring to recal [sic] her scattered thoughts! Surprise, astonishment, that bordered on distraction, seemed to have suspended her faculties, till, waking by degrees to a keen sense of anguish, a whirlwind of rage and indignation roused her torpid pulse. One recollection with frightful velocity following another, threatened to fire her brain. (75)

The reference to ‘scattered thoughts’, ‘suspended faculties’, ‘torpid pulse’ and ‘one recollection [...] following another’ in the ‘brain’, resonates with Hartley’s language, and the

concept of energy/emotional transference that *Observations* depicts. The description gestures to the bodily and mental impact of outside events, and Wollstonecraft shows the heroine's awareness of her own bodily and mental changes. We cannot be sure how such language and notions was mediated to the writer, but she uses this philosophy to demonstrate the mental impact of the trauma on Maria, where her mind is absorbed by the impressions of its past experience: 'tortured by maternal apprehension! Her infant's image was continually floating on Maria's sight, and the first smile of intelligence remembered, as none but a mother, an unhappy mother, can conceive' (75). The deep bodily feelings the heroine analyses are directly related to Wollstonecraft's own experience of being a mother to Fanny. She found this to be a bodily, emotional and intellectual experience that shaped all her later ideas about motherhood. Thus the fictional Maria and the real-life Wollstonecraft merge in this text, as is usual for Wollstonecraft's fiction. Maria finds hope in the thought that she might convince her keeper, Jemima, of her sanity. When she falls in love with another inmate, Henry Darnford, this man becomes a projection of Maria's desires. Her process of attachment is understood in Hartlean terms, where, even before viewing the man, she begins to colour 'the picture she was delineating on her heart' (90). This reflects the power of her mind to enact emotional and bodily changes within her, an understanding of the inevitable body-mind connection that explains the strength of the woman's feelings. This connection with Darnford is also reminiscent of Wollstonecraft's own relationship with Imlay, so we can see how real experiences continually interfere with and inform the writer's narrative. Maria's own overwhelming emotion shocks her: 'She started back, trembling, alarmed at the emotion a strange coincidence of circumstances inspired [...] wondering why she thought so much of a stranger' (90). We can easily imagine that these extreme feelings are ones experienced by Wollstonecraft herself, whose attachment to Imlay are so well documented within her letters

(and in her later suicide attempts). Representing this complex mixture of fiction and reality, the depth and value of this bond between Darnford and Maria is unclear: it is at once based on their shared passion for literature and intellect, but also on their sexual desire. The narrator is critical: 'What a creative power has an affectionate heart! There are beings who cannot live without loving, as poets love; and who feel the electric spark of genius, wherever it awakens sentiment or grace' (86). Yet it is ambiguous whether the man, the woman, or simply their ideas of love, is at fault in causing the later failure of the relationship. The narrator adds only that Maria 'frequently appeared, like a large proportion of her sex, only born to feel' (98).

The second part of the narrative gives space for each character to share his or her life story. Darnford tells Maria of his privileged yet debauched life prior to incarceration; Jemima's is an emotional account that describes the injustices of being an illegitimate daughter, without a mother, and who is sexually and mentally abused as a child by those she encounters.<sup>43</sup> The most substantial account comes from Maria in the form of memoirs to her daughter. These describe the growth of Maria's emotional nature, what she calls 'The circumstances which, during my childhood, occurred to fashion my mind' (126). She understands the doctrine of association reporting of her memoirs that 'These remarks are necessary to elucidate some peculiarities in my character, which by the world are indefinitely termed romantic' (128). Like Mary, Maria tells of being neglected by a tyrannical father and indolent mother and subsequently educated in nature (126). Her own view of love and friendship are completely moulded by a liberally-educated uncle to whom she 'became a favourite' (127). Maria explains that 'endeavouring to enlarge and strengthen my mind, I grew dear to him in proportion as I imbibed his sentiments' (127-128). Here she shows her own awareness of the somewhat artificial or simulated nature of these early copied sentiments; this was someone she 'reverenced' as a 'superior order of beings' (128). When

Maria falls in love with the unworthy George Venebles, the emotional moment of passion is depicted in Hartlean terms to suggest its inevitability after her emotions are touched by his generosity (later discovered to be artificial): ‘George slid a guinea into my hand, putting his finger to his mouth, to enjoin me silence. What a revolution took place, not only in my train of thoughts, but feelings! I trembled with emotion – now, indeed, I was in love’ (135). She explains in her memoirs: ‘Had my home been more comfortable, or my previous acquaintance more numerous, I should not probably have been so eager to open my heart to new affections’ (129). After marrying Venebles he soon squanders their money, and tries to prostitute Maria to pay his debts.

### ***Maria* Part II: Jemima the Saviour Establishing Women’s Love**

The most significant aspect of the narrative lies in the way in which Jemima becomes the hero and saviour for Maria. As noted in the introduction, female saviours are considered fundamental to the feminism of both Blake and Wollstonecraft. In the case of *Maria*, Jemima is depicted as Christ-like, recalling the most famous Saviour in the Christian tradition: the heroine, Maria, specifically calls for Jemima to save her; Jemima rouses her from death and rescues her from desperation; she even ‘resurrects’ her child. The various ways the author attempts to promote the image of Jemima (rather than a male figure) as a saviour demonstrates a purposeful choice to create a new model of strong femininity.

The idea of a positive female-female bond has been gestured at throughout Wollstonecraft’s earlier work. However, the liberal Hartlean culture that necessarily saw

equal value in women gives the author faith in female emotion and female experience so that she fully embraces the idea. As Jemima and Maria grow in affection and mutual understanding, Jemima offers to find Maria's missing child and ensures her escape from the asylum; in one ending, the pair live together with the suddenly found child, and Jemima even prevents Maria from suicide. The Jemima-Maria bond is vital in counteracting (and contrasting) the heroine's relationships with the men in her life. Jemima does not represent any particular female in Wollstonecraft's life, but she can be seen as an amalgamation of the various women that loyally supported her.

The importance of Maria's specifically female-embodied emotion is made significant throughout the novel, and takes seriously the body's role in mediating feelings to the mind. Wollstonecraft certainly drew on her own experiences as a mother to Fanny about which she reported her maternal instinct in detail during her letters, being herself surprized at the immediate depth of their bond. Similarly Maria is 'tortured by maternal apprehension' (75), she had instantly dreamed of her child when sleeping (87) and 'the recollection of her babe' intrudes on her thoughts regularly (81) making her weep with 'the tears of maternal tenderness' (81). Maria's daughter is her hope, and also her inspiration to contemplate women's rights (81); she is disturbed by contemplating her baby's welfare apart from her, and this leads to a bodily emotional reaction: 'From a stranger she could indeed receive the maternal aliment, Maria was grieved at the thought – but who would watch her with a mother's tenderness, a mother's self-denial?' (75). The memory of past impressions of her child continue to create bodily sensations for the heroine despite the girl's absence: 'She heard her speaking half cooing, and felt the little twinkling fingers in her burning bosom – a bosom bursting with the nutrient for which this cherished child might now be pining in vain' (75). The emotions Maria feels are specifically female-gendered: she not only mourns as a

mother for her child, but particularly as a woman for another woman: 'Still she mourned for her child, lamented she was a daughter, and anticipated the aggravated ills of life that her sex rendered almost inevitable' (76). *Maria* suggests that female solidarity emerges from the female body. This is clearest in the relationship between Jemima and Maria when they first meet. The author impresses that Maria's words do not touch Jemima's mind, only heart, not her mind, because they resonate with her sense of embodied womanhood. The detailed explanation of this emotional connection has a physical and specifically female basis:

She [Jemima] had felt the crushing hand of power [...] but when told that her child, only four months old, had been torn from her, even while she was discharging the tenderest maternal office, the woman awoke in a bosom long estranged from feminine emotions, and Jemima determined to alleviate all in her power, without hazarding the loss of her place, the sufferings of a wretched mother, apparently injured, and certainly unhappy. (80)

Maria herself already trusts in the truth value of her own emotional experience. An interesting example of this is in the asylum when she reads 'a book on the powers of the human mind; but, her attention strayed from cold arguments on the nature of what she felt, while she was feeling, and she snapt the chain of the theory to read Dryden's *Guiscard and Sigismunda*' (86). This first text, on the 'powers of the human mind', which references 'the chain of the theory', may well have been either Priestley or Hartley's writings. Her decision not to study such a text depicts Maria as proud to participate in a more phenomenological way of existing that incidentally uses Hartley's ideas to feel and develop, and not merely to display her intellectual knowledge. It is all the more significant therefore, that gradually



falling in love with Darnford, the usually ingenuous and sophisticated emotional figure, Maria, begins to lose her affective autonomy. She would ‘often assume a coldness and indifference foreign from her character’ for ‘fear of outrunning’ Darnford’s love (100) and the narrator explains how Maria’s sense of Darnford’s value increases the less she emotionally engages, and the more time she spends time thinking of him: Maria read his writings ‘over and over again; and fancy, treacherous fancy, began to sketch a character, congenial with her own, from these shadowy outlines’ (86). The novel demonstrates how artificial emotions can be simulated by the mind in this way: ‘Confined to this speculation, every time she re-read them, some fresh refinement of sentiment, or acuteness of thought impressed her, which she was astonished at herself for not having before observed’ (86). This is a serious point that Wollstonecraft presents as something specific to women, and inherent to their inequality. The process of her growing attachment reminds us of the theory of vibrations being re-released owing to idea in the mind, and thus changing the composition of the body. The narrator concludes ‘how difficult it was for women to avoid growing romantic, who have no active duties or pursuits’ (87), a point already made in *Rights of Woman*. However, Maria’s passion for Darnford occupies her mind to the point that he becomes a substitute love-object for her child.<sup>44</sup> Maria’s later recognition about this is described in Hartlean language to explain the reason for guilt:

‘My child is dead!’ [...] Plunged in the deepest melancholy, she would not admit Darnford’s visits; and such is the force of early associations even on strong minds, that, for a while, she indulged the superstitious notion that she was justly punished by the death of her child, for having an instant ceased to regret her loss. Two or three letters from Darnford, full of soothing, manly tenderness, only added to the poignancy to these accusing emotions. (123)

Maria's suffering allows her to temporarily see more clearly how she been absorbed by her desire for a man. The reference to his 'manly tenderness' which 'added poignancy' to her guilt, shows Maria's sense of having betrayed womankind. When Darnford is finally unfaithful to the heroine (and his character is found to be so much unlike Maria's perception of it) the narrator is more obviously critical of the heroine's mistaken passion:

With Darnford she did not taste uninterrupted felicity; there was a volatility in his manner which often distressed her; but love gladdened the scene; besides, he was the most tender, sympathising creature in the world. A fondness for the sex often gives an appearance of humanity to the behaviour of men, who have small pretensions to the reality; and they seem to love others, when they are only pursuing their own gratification. (92-93)<sup>45</sup>

Maria's experience of Darnford relates to Wollstonecraft's experience of Imlay: both the fictional character and Wollstonecraft find themselves rejected by the men they love and angry, but harbouring competing feelings of love to their daughters. Wollstonecraft's growing distrust of romantic relationships is deeply related to her disillusionment with the pure love she thought she shared with Imlay. In 1795 her letters to him reveal her growing turmoil regarding his lack of affection, his absences, and her distaste for his preference for the pursuit of business above her and his child. She pleads with him: 'You have a heart, my friend, yet, hurried away by the impetuosity of inferior feelings, you have sought in vulgar excesses for that gratification which only the heart can bestow' (Wollstonecraft, *Letters* 115). She asks: 'I have wondered that you did not set a higher value on my heart' (129-130), and

her final desperation when she realizes his betrayal indicates the fierceness of her disappointment: 'May you never know by experience what you have made me endure. Should your sensibility ever awake, remorse will find its way to your heart ; and, in the midst of business and sensual pleasure, I shall appear before you, the victim of your deviation from rectitude' (186).

Wollstonecraft's experience with Imlay had the effect of highlighting to her the significance of alternative relationships and the female-female bond is particularly vital to her project. In *Maria*, familiarity with the theory of physical association is used by the characters themselves to bond through 'experience-sharing'. This is a different appropriation of the theory, where women learn about each other through the act of telling their life-histories in a specifically Hartlean manner; as well inviting understanding from the listener and showing trust, the sharing of history is used to account for present circumstances and feelings by looking at past impressions. In the case of Jemima and Maria,<sup>46</sup> the two women part from their initial meeting with Mary's hope of further contact. This is despite Jemima's generally cold and almost menacing behaviour<sup>47</sup> because the heroine trusts in Jemima's inner kindness and assumes her troubled past; women, more than men, are not expected to have a complex history that has created them. The narrator explains early about Maria's influence on Jemima: 'she failed immediately to rouse a lively sense of injustice in the mind of her guard, because it had been sophisticated into misanthropy' however, 'she touched her heart' (79). It is important that Maria's suppositions regarding Jemima's goodness are deemed valid: later in the story, when Maria 'kindly' asks the cause of Jemima's tears, Jemima 'felt for once in her life, treated like a fellow-creature' (101) and so she 'voluntarily' begins an 'account of herself' (101). The use of the Hartlean word 'voluntarily' asks us to consider the way in which Jemima acts. For Hartley there is finally little to distinguish between voluntary and

automatic actions, and we can see that in the same way, Jemima's tale is told instinctively because her heart has been newly touched; yet Wollstonecraft wants to show that Jemima also chooses to show trust and begin speaking. Jemima's life-story then enables Maria to access her friend and confirm that 'Jemima's humanity had rather been benumbed than killed, by the keen frost she had to brave at her entrance into life; an appeal then to her feelings on this tender point, surely would not be fruitless' (120).

The manner in which Jemima behaves is related to her childhood by the narrator and Jemima. The woman reports being 'Left in dirt, to cry with cold and hunger' (103) and 'thrown into the world without the grand support of life – a mother's affection' (106). She is treated as a servant in her father's household, 'literally speaking, fed with the refuse of the table, with her leavings' (104). Jemima is a woman who says she 'never had a taste of human kindness to soften the rigour of perpetual labour' (105), but Wollstonecraft demonstrates the revolutionary potential of kindness between women. In response to her tale, when Jemima concludes: "'Who ever risked any thing for me? – Who ever acknowledged me to be a fellow-creature?'" (119). Maria takes her hand in compassion, 'and Jemima, more overcome by kindness than she ever been by cruelty, hastened out of the room to conceal her emotions' (119). The writer depicts here the constant impact of impressions on the heart, illuminating through the Jemima-Maria bond, how emotional personality can be changed continually according to the kindness or cruelty the individual receives.

The sharing of stories is a specifically female resource that allows women to grow in strength and to understand that they had potential to develop differently.<sup>48</sup> The story of Jemima impacts on Maria in this way, enabling her to contemplate women's plight: 'the story she had just heard made her thoughts take a wider range [...] Thinking of Jemima's peculiar

fate and her own, she was led to consider the oppressed state of women, and to lament that she had given birth to a daughter' (120). The relevance and vitality of women to one another's development and happiness is clear where the female-female bond offers a refuge for women to practise the qualities of love and devotion that Hartley so strongly endorses on his 'scale of perfection'. Wollstonecraft had asserted in *Rights of Woman* that 'I therefore agree with the moralist who assert, "that women have seldom so much generosity as men;" and that their narrow affections, to which justice and humanity are often sacrificed, render the sex apparently inferior, especially as they are commonly inspired by men' (235). This view is updated in *Maria*, where the female-female bond provides women with the space to practise a virtuous heroism outside any male influence. Maria and Jemima establish a deep-rooted affection, where both are inspired by the other; Maria has hope on meeting Jemima that she can convince her of her sanity (78). The narrator states: 'How grateful was her attention to Maria!' (81) and 'Maria anxiously expected the return of the attendant, as a gleam of light to break the gloom of idleness' (79). In turn, Jemima grows interested in her charge and wants to earn her respect: 'Maria's conversation had amused and interested her, and the natural consequence was a desire scarcely observed by herself, of obtaining the esteem of a person she admired' (80). Meeting Maria also ensures that, for Jemima, 'The remembrance of better days was rendered more lively' and 'a spark of hope roused her mind to new activity' (80-81). Such mutual inspiration renders the relationship positive for both women, who recognize each other as women and as equals. Furthermore, this relationship has a religious aspect. In the case of Jemima and Maria, both women save each other. Jemima's humanity and faith in people is reignited through Maria's compassion and her friendship (101), leading her shed a tear: 'the first tear that social enjoyment had ever drawn from her' (119). While Jemima initiated their escape from the asylum, she relies on her friend to re-introduce her to the

society that rejected her. She says, 'I am prepared then [...] to accompany you in flight [...] I have perhaps no right now to expect the performance of your promise; but on you it depends to reconcile me with the human race' (189).

For Maria, Jemima becomes 'the faithful Jemima' (191-192), a heroine and saviour figure. After Maria's initial reservations about leaving the asylum without Darnford, she clings to Jemima for her rescue. This is a scene full of religious imagery that represents Wollstonecraft's natural fusion of faith, philosophical theory, and hope for women's relationships. When Maria sees a figure 'scarcely human' and with a 'visage that would have suited one possessed by a devil' (190) she escapes his grasp and 'throwing her arms around Jemima, cried, "Save me!"'. This recognition of her friend as one who can save is later made particularly relevant in the sudden re-appearance daughter, previously thought dead. Furthermore in this regard, when Maria, void of hope, takes laudanum to end her life, it is Jemima who prevents her death and gives her a new life. At this time a 'new vision' appears before her, where 'Jemima seemed to enter – leading a little creature, that with tottering footsteps approached the bed' (203). When Wollstonecraft took laudanum it was Imlay that rescued her, so the writer's choice that in the fictional account this should be Jemima in preference for a hero, is an important choice. The Christ-like portrayal of Jemima is complete when she says: "Behold your child!" and speaks with 'solemnity' to ask 'would you leave her alone in the world, to endure what I have endured?' (103). Wollstonecraft demonstrates the vital restorative potential that female-female relationships have for women. The mother-daughter bond is another important example of its strength and one that gives Maria a reason to live. She says in Christ-like terms herself: ' "The conflict is over! –I will live for my child!"' (103), as if having defeated an evil force as Jesus did when he declared "It is finished" (John 19:30). Between female friends, the novel shows that when women use their

emotions to relate to each other in complete godlike love, they enjoy hope and protection from a world not yet ready to accept their equality with men. This point is particularly poignant considering the hostility that many women expressed towards Wollstonecraft after her marriage to Godwin, and which must have made the loyalty of those like Mary Hays all the more significant.

## **Conclusion**

Examining Wollstonecraft's feminism in relation to Hartlean culture evidences the development of her thought from 1787 until 1797. In particular, the feminist's faith in the specifically female emotions, the female bond, and the female experience is clear. Initially, Wollstonecraft aimed to promote the importance of women's education and the writer was committed to suggesting the potential of women if intellectual equality between the sexes were achieved; however her growing interest in promoting the special differences to be found in women are important and reflect a culture similarly fascinated by questions of gender differences. This also reflects Wollstonecraft's ambivalent attitudes towards men in her work, who at once enable women's development but also restrict their emotional autonomy and confidence. Such conflicting narratives reflect the contrasting experiences with men she had in her own life. While Fuseli and Imlay may have let her down badly, Johnson and Godwin were sources of kindness and healing. Godwin in particular was someone she enthused about, since he united her feelings of love and safety. She reported feeling 'not rapture' but 'sublime tranquility' in his arms, and a 'magic in affection' (Wollstonecraft qtd Gordon 324). Yet his integrity and loyalty in marrying Wollstonecraft (and then protecting her from a judgmental

society) was somewhat effaced by his *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* published in January 1798. The negative repercussions also represent this double nature of the male characters she depicted, who cause harm, even accidentally. The candid retelling of Wollstonecraft's emotional and sexual experiences led Southey to complain that Godwin had 'stripped her naked' (Southey qtd Gordon 372) and scandal and criticism against 'Mrs Godwin' abounded long after the text was published.

Godwin's act in damaging Wollstonecraft's reputation adds pathos to her last novel's feminist message. By 1796, Hartlean concepts and language are even more integrated and accepted in the writer's thinking, allowing Wollstonecraft's female characters to adopt a philosophical approach where they can forward their faith in the female body and female emotion more radically. This assurance includes trust in women's inherent ability to be a resource to each other, and confidence in female emotion outside of a male-identified reason or philosophy. We might contemplate that in the widely-successful *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796), the author declared:

When a warm heart has received strong impressions, they are not to be effaced. Emotions become sentiments, and the imagination renders even transient sensations permanent by fondly retracing them. I cannot, without a thrill of delight, recollect views I have seen, which are not to be forgotten, nor looks I have felt in every nerve, which I shall never more meet.  
(39)

Such a comment reveals the emotional confidence with which the author expresses herself in her later writing, especially with regard to the impact of women's emotion and experience.



The value given to the integrity of the passions in Hartlean culture both enabled and justified the intense feelings of women. We may contemplate Wollstonecraft's own personal expression of her emotional potential in a letter to Gilbert Imlay, which relates to the argument of this chapter, that female-female relationships are a protected space for women to practise their emotions:

I have the sincerest esteem and affection for you – but the desire of regaining peace, (do you understand me?) has made me forget the respect due to my own emotions – scared emotions, that are the sure harbingers of delight I was formed to enjoy – and shall enjoy, for nothing can extinguish the heavenly spark. (*Letters Written in Sweden* 143)<sup>49</sup>

While Wollstonecraft's work is tragic, it presents hope for the future when men and women are educated to adopt the Hartlean concepts that will inspire them to view the sexes in terms of their equal value and potential; at such a time, all people would have the opportunity to reflect, self-improve and be compassionate to each other's weaknesses; furthermore, both sexes could then feel responsible for shaping their own futures. Hartley had promised and attempted to prove that each person should find their Godlike happiness on earth. The sense of his having proved this through the mechanical workings of the nerves, brain, vibrations, and association, allowed Wollstonecraft to seek women's happiness on earth, and depict them in terms of their potential heroism.

## Chapter Four

### Blake's Female Saviours and Hartley's Self-Annihilation

'Hartley a Man of Judgment then Judgment was a Fool what Nonsense'

William Blake's *Annotations to Watson's Apology* 1798

(*The Complete Poetry and Prose* 619)

#### Introduction

Throughout the twentieth century, Blake has been depicted as a 'repressive figure for feminism' (Dent 121). Susan Fox's well-known article published in 1977 (that proposed an inherent sexism in Blake) came to be widely accepted in the twentieth century, and Anne Mellor has remained a severe critic of Blake's patriarchy.<sup>1</sup> However, more recently, such evaluations have been successfully questioned owing to new readings of his work that take into account the feminist context of the period, and especially the influence of Mary Wollstonecraft.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Helen Bruder's relatively recent *Women Reading William Blake* (2007) is testament to the new importance awarded to women's engagement with the artist-poet. While this collection of essays is by no means specifically feminist in its approach, Bruder argues that it remains a valuable 'feminist gesture' (xviii), providing new ways of conceiving Blake outside of some male critics' established interpretations. The current chapter continues this work, but rather than seeking Wollstonecraft's influence on Blake, or re-imagining Blake's work from the perspective of a woman reader, I am interested in

providing a feminist interpretation based on the wider ‘Hartlean culture’, which lent itself to feminist thought.

The issue of Blake and feminism is most often discussed in terms of the artist-poet’s changing views on sexuality. This is because his ideas about erotic freedom are seen as radical and progressive. While these debates are important and helpful, I discuss Blake’s feminism in relation to emotion, Christianity, and gender-relations, subjects which were continually explored during the period. Like Wollstonecraft, Blake is interested in synthesizing his various intellectual and spiritual commitments. Even while his contemporaries may be concerned to pursue more secular accounts for emotion and radical politics, Blake’s high valuation of spirituality and the unknown remains vital to his worldview.

The epigraph to this chapter from 1798 shows Blake’s witty annotation in response to Richard Watson’s *Apology for the Bible*, in which he challenges the writer’s view of Hartley as amongst ‘men of Judgment’ (Blake, *Annotations* 49). This comment signifies Blake’s impression of Hartley as eccentric or an outsider, a person removed from traditional Enlightenment thinking. In particular, Hartley is positioned against Watson’s literal interpretation of scripture, revealing Blake’s refusal to present the two as unified in their thinking or approach.<sup>3</sup> We might also reflect here that Blake’s engraving of Hartley completed in 1791 presents the philosopher like Shaftesbury, as the man of feeling, emphasising his distance from the dominant intellectual culture.

To examine Blake’s feminism, and his search to illuminate the sacred value of both sexes, the prophetic poem *Milton* (1804-[11]) provides the main focus for discussion. This piece is concerned with the male protagonist Milton’s search for divine perfection and heroism, but the narrative works alongside Blake’s strong interest to debate gender relations

and claim the power of the feminine. As well as revealing Blake's most developed ideas about gender and feminism, *Milton* provides useful opportunities for us to continue observing Hartley's influence after 1797 (when Wollstonecraft's *Maria* was written). *Milton* was conceived before 1800 and started being composed between 1800 and 1803.<sup>4</sup> As discussed in my Introduction and chapter one, *Observations on Man* had been published by Joseph Johnson in 1791 (for which Blake engraved Hartley's image), twice again in 1801 (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> eds.), as well as in 1810. Smaller sections were produced in 1793, 1794, 1795 and 1798, so Hartley's presence was still intellectually and symbolically important throughout the 1790s and into the nineteenth century. This was a time when Hartley was increasingly marketed as a religious and moral thinker with Johnson's publications including the third volume of religious/moral *Notes and Additions* by Pistorius, and the fifth edition in 1810 being printed in two volumes, but including Hartley's 'Prayers and Religious Meditations'. As such, *Milton* emerges from a climate increasingly fascinated by Hartley's unification of sensationalist psychology, his mechanical approach to mankind, and his inclusive understanding of Christianity that was forgiving of error and saw human beings' divine potential, regardless of their gender. In *Milton*, Hartlean language and ideas are visible in the text, and they are most powerful when they promote 'the feminine'.

The fact that *Milton* is a prophecy is also important in signalling its united religious and political connotations that enables its radicalism. As Jonathan Roberts argues in relation to Blakean Prophecy, 'Blake advances a gospel of liberation rooted in a Biblical prophetic tradition in which hegemonic powers and ideologies that have separated people from God are overturned by prophetic acts' (*St Paul's Gift* 10). He continues, 'As a result, the language of political liberation and that of religious liberation are inseparable in Blake's work' (10). This connection encourages Roberts to refer to the 'revolutionary potential' of Blake's work as

well as its strong spiritual implications. For him, 'The truly radical nature of prophecy, however, lies not in the fact that it speaks on behalf of a people, but that it speak *to* and provides *for* that people. Prophecy emancipates individuals and communities by enabling them to reconceptualise their relationships with God' (10). This sense of Blakean Prophecy is important for a discussion of Blake's treatment of women and of Hartley. It enhances our sensitivity to how it has at once radical and religious intention. Blake, as well as Wollstonecraft, is speaking on behalf of women and addressing the readers, not only to change views about gender, but also to create a fairer world for God's people.

### **Blake, Women and Feminism**

While Blake's feminism has been debated owing to his ambiguous representations of women, when it is acknowledged critics usually associate it with Wollstonecraft's influence. This is especially the case for two of his poems: *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793) and 'Mary' <sup>5</sup> (1803). *Visions* was written the year after *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was published, and 'Mary' (c1803) shortly after Godwin's controversial *Memoirs of the Author of Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798),<sup>6</sup> and both pieces capture the atmosphere and debate surrounding Wollstonecraft's life and philosophy. *Visions* is one of the most important poems for scholars writing about Blake's feminism (Essick 161) because it describes the intellectually and erotically liberated virgin, Oothoon, who declares her sexual desire proudly at the poem's beginning: 'I loved Theotormon / And I was not ashamed' (61). Yet despite her subsequent radical and sensual plucking of the female nymph/Marygold to pleasure herself, Oothoon is enslaved both literally and mentally (Bruder 77). Bromion, seeing her as a 'harlot', rapes her, and she is subsequently rejected by her jealous lover Theotormon, who

cannot accept her erotic independence or active mind; as a result, she is unable to communicate and is doomed to lament her misery, rather than discover love or happiness: ‘every morning wails Oothoon, but Theotormon sits / Upon the margined ocean conversing with shadows dire’ (68). In her exemplary work on the poem, Bruder draws attention to its Wollstonecraftian atmosphere, arguing that Blake ‘inveighs against the oppression of women and children in the patriarchal family with a fervour equal to that of the angriest Mary Wollstonecraft’ (79). Similarly noticing this tone, Essick describes Oothoon in highly Wollstonecraftian terms, as ‘active and heroic, a victim of male tyrannies. Her struggle for self-expression and freedom from repression would seem a precursor to modern feminism’ (616). Yet the poem has also been related to Wollstonecraft’s life experiences more particularly, leading J. Middleton Murray to describe it as ‘the personal story of Mary Wollstonecraft’ (Franklin 107, Essick 629). Nelson Hilton goes further to suggest it represents her love affair with Henry Fuseli (69).<sup>7</sup> As Shirley Dent remarks of Hilton’s work, ‘If Hilton is right, then Blake is engaged in carving a subtle space in which to articulate not just female desire or the Female Will, but the struggle of the female will and female desire in a closed society’ (122). This work is important in reminding us of the obvious resonances between the ideas and situations being discussed by Blake’s milieu, and the poetry that was inspired by them. In this case, Blake’s gesturing to Wollstonecraft makes particularly clear his feminist sympathies to those readers who knew both.<sup>8</sup>

The later poem, ‘Mary’, describes the decline of this alluring female protagonist, who evokes jealousy and hatred amongst her society, owing to her liberal and unconventional way of relating to others. At the ballroom, being popular with ‘young men’, ‘Mary moves in soft beauty and conscious delight, / To augment with sweet smiles all the joys of the night’

(*Complete Poetry* 115). However, unknown to her, she also evokes distrust and dislike, being finally rejected by society, much in the same way as Wollstonecraft:

And Mary arose among friends to be free,  
But no friend from henceforward thou, Mary, shalt see.

Some said she was proud, some call'd her a whore,  
And some, when she passed by, shut to the door;  
A damp cold came o'er her, her blushes all fled;  
Her lilies and roses are blighted and shed (115)

Despite being the only naturally loving and honest figure, Mary of the poem becomes desperate and alone, and the poet argues that she will not receive peace until her death:

All faces have envy, sweet Mary, but thine;  
  
And thine is a face of sweet love in despair,  
And thine is a face of mild sorrow and care,  
And thine is a face of wild terror and fear  
That shall never be quiet till laid on its bier (116)

Blake gives his argument against society a religious inflection, by relating people's judgemental behaviour to their lack of divinity:

With faces of scorn and with eyes of disdain,  
Like foul fiends inhabiting Mary's mild brain;  
She remembers no face like the Human Divine (116)

As well as these spiritual ramifications, where she loses her sense of God's presence, we can see that the hatred she receives impacts on her physically: the bad feeling like 'foul fiends' affects her 'mild brain'. Yet this poem still upholds the protagonist as divine herself, using the stark contrast between her own nature and that of society to celebrate the woman's individuality and innocence. I agree with critics who argue for the parallels between *Visions*, 'Mary', and Wollstonecraft. These connections are important for establishing Blake's radicalism and they allow us to situate his feminism in a culture that limited women's representation. Even if Blake's attempt to depict female liberation was finally unsuccessful (as Bruder claims)<sup>9</sup> his sympathy with Wollstonecraft would have been obvious to those readers in the Johnson Circle, as well as others acquainted with both writers. Blake was aware of how he was positioning himself socially and politically, and his work would have been especially powerful because of the events and issues it resonated with.

The following analysis of *Milton* examines the heroine in this poem, who differs from the heroines of both *Visions* and 'Mary'. It also takes into account the poem's wider feminist elements where Blake deals with issues surrounding 'the feminine'. The contrasts that appear in *Milton* reveal a shift in Blake's thinking where his work becomes more thematic and abstract in its commentary on women's experience. Aside from Wollstonecraft's influence, the other reasons that led Blake to address women's rights and potential are varied.<sup>10</sup> John Sutherland in 1972, and more recently Tom Hayes (2004) and Helen Bruder (1997), offer three important readings of Blake's attitudes that represent his more generalized desire to



challenge the patriarchal ideology regarding sex and gender. Sutherland's article emerges from the feminist climate of the 1970s that was suspicious of Blake's attitudes towards women and brought issues of gender and sexuality to the forefront. Demonstrating the renewed consideration of Blake in terms of gender and sex, Sutherland argues for Blake's 'preoccupation with sexual love' and 'the relationships between the sexes, and with the ways these relationships affect the psychic states of individuals, and of the "eternal man"' (424). He depicts Blake as a thinker continually fascinated by the potential of sex to be liberating, despite its equal potential to confine, and so traces the artist-poet's changes in thought to his political agenda. For Sutherland, there is noticeable progression between Blake's early and later writing: initially 'the celebration of the relatively abstract feeling of love is mixed with a celebration of immediate physical sensation' (424) and sex was a means of liberation (425). However, according to Sutherland's reading of Blake's later thinking 'The real "Sanctuary of Eden," or Eternity, includes the whole body' and 'genital sexuality seems to have been part of the delights of Beulah, but not of Eternity' (430).<sup>11</sup> This reading is particularly relevant to the poem *Milton*, which is noticeably different in its discussion of gender compared to Blake's previous work, since sexual love plays a less important role in the overall implied feminism of the piece. It is Sutherland's view that this changing emphasis away from sexuality is attributable to Blake's vision of spiritual revolution, where forgiveness comes to hold a more prominent role in liberation.<sup>12</sup> Equally important for Sutherland is Blake's continued attention to sex and women, and the artist-poet's search for a more meaningful way to express female liberation and harmony between the sexes. I support and develop these readings, arguing that forgiveness and pity are central to *Milton* and purposefully associated with women and the feminine.

More recently, Hayes and Bruder have presented Blake's inherent feminism by turning attention to his passionate attempts to question a heteronormative ideology. While Hayes disclaims those who see Blake as misogynistic and attempts to place his views in context, Bruder redresses the general lack of feminist scholarship in Blake Studies and offers a feminist reading of his earlier work. Confronting the issue of misogyny directly, Hayes also discusses Blake's use of androgyny in his images, which are usually criticized by feminist scholars.<sup>13</sup> Hayes claims this idea of gender to be feminist and, referring to Boehme's belief that originally all beings were androgynous men (a view with which Blake was familiar), he comments:

This vision of a world without women may be misogynistic, but it is no more so than the belief that a woman was the cause of man's fall or the belief that an original matriarchy was ruined by the fall into patriarchy. Like Boehme, Blake suggests that complete spiritual beings without lack once existed, but, although he looks forward to a time when sexual delight and spiritual bliss will be merged, he never expresses bitterness about our failure to reach this state. (153)

For him, Blake's image of the 'Visionary Head' is the 'ego-ideal' that evidences his own desire to be an androgynous figure (144): 'it epitomizes the insight articulated at the end of Jerusalem that, contrary to conventional misogynistic belief, those who take the man's subject position worship the phallus, and those who take the woman's position have access to a pleasure beyond that which is possible in conventional sexual relations'. (144). At the heart of Hayes' argument is Blake's description of the Fall in *The Book of Urizen*, which lamented the separation of the sexes: 'All Eternity shuddered at sight / Of the first female now separate' (*Selected Poems* 147). He argues that 'Blake could not imagine anything good

resulting from this' (160), reminding us that the poet described to Crabb Robinson, the 'Union of the Sexes in Man as in God-an androgynous state' (161). According to Hayes' reading, Blake felt that, 'come the apocalypse, men would be restored to their original androgynous state' (161).

Finally, Bruder's feminist analysis of Blake published in 1997, *William Blake and the Daughters of Albion*, is still highly respected (Hayes 159) as an extensive and vital contribution to Blake scholarship, which encourages completely new ways of seeing the artist-poet. Like the previous scholars, so Bruder is concerned to depict how Blake regards women's sexuality,<sup>14</sup> arguing that 'Blake is of value to feminism not because he maintained an exemplary and unwavering feminist commitment but rather because he took sexual power seriously' (36). Her monograph is based on the belief that 'whilst many aspects of late-eighteenth century radical and popular culture have been significantly understudied, the most seriously neglected contemporary discourses ignored by Blake scholars are those concerned with women, sexuality, gender and sexual difference' (1). Bruder sees Blake as one who 'places the liberation of women's sexuality at the top of his own 'feminist' agenda' (57). For her, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* is his unsuccessful yet radical attempt to intervene within a patriarchal ideology that tried to silence women's eroticism and desire. Most important to Bruder is situating Blake within a culture obsessed with issues of sexuality against those critics who view his work as a 'temporal cultural effluvia' (180). She accepts that paradoxically Blake is at once a 'critic of patriarchy' but at times a 'hectoring misogynist' because of his extreme and changing views.<sup>15</sup> However, more important was his devotion to reconstructing sexual mythologies to make sense of his experience, and to challenge ideology (182-183).

### ***Milton: A Poem; Upholding Women, Refined Emotion, and Self-Annihilation***

By situating Blake's feminism in the context of Hartlean culture, I am attentive to debates about emotion, alternative interpretations of Christianity, and the on-going conversations about women's rights. Reading Blake in these terms (rather than with regard to his ideas about sexuality) offers fresh insight into his attitudes towards women's potential. Furthermore, the artist-poet appears more successfully feminist and more united to Wollstonecraft's own feminist philosophy. The resonance between these two writers is visible in their Hartlean approach that synthesizes Christian spirituality and imagery, theoretical concepts about body and mind, and their interest in emotion and equality.

*Milton* opens with a vision of Milton who is 'unhappy tho' in heav'n' (63) and still attempting to understand God and the mysteries of the universe. As he walks about in Eternity, he is reported as noticing his wives and daughters, that 'Sixfold Emanation', 'scatter'd thro' the deep / In torment' (63). Although Milton has been in Heaven for one hundred years, it is only on hearing the Bard's prophetic song that he is inspired to take action: first to redeem his tormented wives and daughters through self-sacrifice; and second, to annihilate Satan who he denigrates as his Spectre. The Bard's song is a fundamental part of the poem and it is here that the highly emotional and charismatic Satan is described through an account of his rebellion in Eternity. Satan is a more feminized figure than Milton. He is interested in evoking the pity of those around him, and he is protected by women before his ultimate rejection. The first half of the poem details Milton's journey to rescue his wives and daughters and lists the obstacles he encounters along his way. The second, shorter half of the poem records the journey of the female figure, Ololon, to rescue Milton. This rescue mission takes place because in pity and guilt the wives and daughters seek to save Milton and unite

with Ololon to follow his path. The conclusion to the poem includes their release from Ololon to freedom; furthermore, attention is finally diverted away from Milton because Jesus reappears. In keeping with the poem's Christian imagery surrounding rescue, redemption and Christ, the end looks towards 'The Great Harvest and Vintage of the Nations' (131), a reference to the Book of Revelation and a spiritual revolution. Satan is never annihilated by Milton who declares that to annihilate another does not suit the Laws of Eternity.

*Milton* is a poem that rejects misogyny for a more liberated vision of gender and women. This does not see an answer to female empowerment lying within their sexual freedom, but within their spiritual and emotional freedom. Reading *Milton* with attention to Hartlean culture and Hartley's philosophy draws out the feminist, Saviour narrative in the text.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Blake's Christian imagery and exploration of emotion alert readers to the heroes and heroines of the piece. The poem's most present figures, Satan and Milton, are significant in revealing the artist-poet's rethinking of gender. Although Milton is the main character, as a misogynist he cannot be considered a hero or Saviour-figure despite his desire to appear in this light. Satan is, paradoxically, the more admirable character, and presents a contrast to Milton especially owing to his connections with women and his unconventional masculinity. Furthermore, although the poem purports to be about Milton's heroic quest to self-annihilation (or Satan's flaws and fall), it is rather Blake's background, female figure, Ololon, who is depicted in Christ-like terms and takes precedence by the end of the poem. Ololon achieves the state of annihilation to save others. As a female counterpart to Milton, she makes her own epic journey in the poem's second half, mirroring Milton. This makes the figures' contrast all the more striking and encourages a consideration of gender in the poem.

It is interesting that just as we saw Jemima being saviour to Maria in Wollstonecraft's *Maria*, and Wollstonecraft's other heroines Mrs Mason, Mary and Maria, wanting to rescue

those who come into their lives, so we see Blake depicting female saviours in *Milton*. This reflects a moment in time when the imagined potential of women (especially religious potential) gave hope to radical writers who could also look towards a more progressive society for women in other areas. For both Blake and Wollstonecraft, the potential for women to be Christ-like is worthy of depiction because of its radical connotations;<sup>17</sup> furthermore, Hartlean ideas are used to facilitate how these writers could imagine women's worth. The depiction of women as self-sacrificing heroines is part of an established religious tradition and has often been interpreted as empowering. John Wayland Coakley writes that 'In the West, the period from the late twelfth century through to the end of the Middle Ages witnessed a new kind of female saint or holy woman, known for a combination of asceticism and interiorized devotion typically accompanied by visions, revelations, and mystical states' (1). The vitae (saints' lives) written about them also account for the proliferation of literary works by women from the twelfth century onwards. This hagiography created a striking image of saints' various powers: 'the women prophesy, they warn, they advise, and sometimes they expound upon ideas, all from a direct knowledge or consciousness of things divine' (Wayland Coakley 2). Interestingly, women's closeness to Christ was linked to their physical weakness and inferiority to men, allowing for various images of power to be represented in the guise of femininity and subordination (Wayland Coakley 12). This elevation of the weak, hidden or poor is also a central aspect of New Testament teaching and imagery that radically inverts traditional models of power.

### ***Milton: Heroic Themes in Hartlean Language***

As well as drawing on a rich literary and biblical tradition, *Milton's* positive presentation of women reflects Blake's engagement with the Hartlean ideas of self-annihilation and perfection, as well as a sophisticated parodying of the real John Milton's character to forward his point. When Blake specifically upholds the feminine through his Hartlean discussion of annihilation, he uses this popular interest in emotional cultivation (and the importance of a relational way of affective expression) to encourage worth to be awarded to typically feminine values. In the poem, unlike Milton, Satan demonstrates a need for others and a deep understanding of pity. These particular qualities make him less traditionally masculine, especially against the misogynistic Milton who is emotionally closed, independent, and more difficult to empathize with. Satan is also the more modern of the two figures in this respect, emblemizing Hartlean rather than the seventeenth-century values and culture encapsulated by Milton. As will be discussed, Satan is usually read in relation to Blake's patron, William Hayley. In 1800, Hayley had invited Blake to Felpham on the premise of providing more work and greater freedom. Blake was initially overjoyed at the opportunity for artistic and financial independence, as well as being captivated by his new friend. However, by 1801, he became suspicious and disillusioned, believing that Hayley was giving him menial tasks to purposefully prevent his writing and painting. Quite swiftly, Hayley appeared to Blake as resentful of his superior abilities, leading a sinister aspect to their relationship to develop. As a result of Hayley's personality and actions, he is often seen by critics of Blake's work to represent the enemy of creativity and a symbol of jealousy and dominance. Northrop Frye suspected that in Hayley 'It was hatred; a half-spiteful, half-horrified mixture of resentment and fear' (*Fearful Symmetry* 329) that motivated his negative actions against Blake. Yet

Hayley was also the friend to the artist-poet, and the relationship was far from simplistic, especially in Blake's mind. Alexander Gilchrist described Hayley as at once 'pertinacious, wrong-headed [...] weakly greedy of applause', but also 'an agreeable companion, really kind-hearted and generous' who came up with a 'well-intended, ill-considered scheme' for his friend (Gilchrist 136). I will explore this complexity in Satan/Hayley later, but here I suggest that both Satan and Ololon's presence in the poem is vital in promoting the feminine. Ololon stands for a more overtly positive force of good, but Satan is deeply associated with feminine traits and female characters.

The most powerful symbol of femininity however, is Ololon, who achieves annihilation, and like other female figures in the poem, has the ability to be selfless and reach the emotional perfection described by Hartley. Self-annihilation is important to this chapter's argument for the connection between Blake and Hartlean culture. As seen in chapter two, the attainment of this perfect state was considered by Hartley to reflect each person's realization of his or her divine potential. Allen explains that Hartley's aspiration for 'perfect self-annihilation and resting in God as our centre' was a familiar concept at the time Hartley was writing, and the philosopher was contemporaneous with William Law, Jonathan Edwards, John and Charles Wesley, Zinzendorf, and Israel Ben Eliezer, all of whom resonate with his way of thinking (334). For Hartley, self-annihilation manifests when the person has successfully replaced love of self, with the love of others and of God, so it is a state achieved when sympathy and theopathy flow without restriction.<sup>18</sup> In particular, Hartley's self-annihilation was explained in terms of acquiring particular virtues that eventually and inevitably lead the self to take second place. It is related to what Hartley calls rational self-interest ('the pursuit of such things, as are believed to be the means for obtaining our greatest possible happiness', (*Observations* II:271)) because this pleasure has the potential to be



virtuous. Rational self-interest lies ‘between the impure motives of sensation, imagination, ambition, gross self-interest, and refined self-interest, on the one hand, and the pure ones of sympathy, theopathy, and the moral sense on the other’ (II:278). As such, ‘when it restrains the impure ones, or cherishes the pure, it may be reckoned a virtue; when it cherishes the impure or damps the pure, a vice’ (II:278). More than this, however, when rational self-interest pursues the ‘virtuous dispositions of benevolence, piety, and the moral sense’ this ‘part of our progress’ towards perfection is to be approved of especially since it is so connected with eventual self-annihilation. Hartley explains that these dispositions ‘particularly that of the love of God’ (II:282) ‘check all the foregoing ones’ of sensation, imagination, and ambition (II:282) and ‘seem utterly to extinguish them at last. This would be perfect self-annihilation, and resting in God as our centre’ (II:282). Each of the pleasures is fundamental because the person must pass through every pleasure before he or she reaches self-annihilation:

And, upon the whole, we may conclude, that though it be impossible to begin without sensuality, and sensual selfishness, or to proceed without the other intermediate principles, and particularly that of rational self-interest; yet we ought never to be satisfied with ourselves, till we arrive at perfect self-annihilation, and the pure love of God. (II:282)

Self-annihilation is achieved only after emotional training so that the pleasures become fixated with the generous and pious sources of happiness. Benevolence and the moral sense require kind actions towards others; similarly the love of God can only be reflected by his goodness towards all mankind.

Blake used this key idea of emotional self-annihilation later in his career after Hartley was re-popularized by Johnson.<sup>19</sup> The first appearance arose in *The Four Zoas* ([?1796-?1807]), followed by its most frequent uses in *Milton*, *Jerusalem*, and finally, *The Ghost of Abel* (1822) (Jones 7).<sup>20</sup> *Milton* has the most Hartlean employment of the term, perhaps reflecting its emergence from a specific cultural moment when Hartley's text was receiving increased attention in the capital. In this poem, the prominent female figure, Ololon, is shown to live relationally and compassionately with others owing to her ability to be Christ-like and relinquish or shift her identity. Furthermore, Ololon's benevolent emotional perfection frames her divinity, much in the way Hartley describes.

In his book *Blake on Language, Power, and Self-Annihilation* (2010), John H. Jones alludes to *Observations*' influence on Blake and the potential Blake-Hartley connection. He makes the association because of their similar understanding of the term 'self-annihilation' (7).<sup>21</sup> Although Jones remarks on the 'very little' critical scholarship on Blake's use of the word 'self-annihilation' (4), his own research is also more interested in how the concept affects the 'abdication of univocal authority and embracement of dialogue' (a more aesthetic than philosophical investigation) (4).<sup>22</sup> This chapter gives attention to the more emotional and ethical way in which the term is used by Hartley and reflected in Blake's writing. I suggest that the artist-poet's interest in self-annihilation enables his discussion of gender and the meaning of heroism; Blake uses the positive associations of self-annihilation to criticize the masculine and status-driven Milton, to uphold Satan, and to elevate Ololon who better enacts its relational significance.

Other Hartlean ideas and discourse are dispersed widely within *Milton*, indicating Blake's strong familiarity with the intellectual culture of the 1790s. Hartlean concepts are noticeable from the very beginning of 'Book the First', when the poet summons the

Daughters of Beulah (who represent inspiration) (Dictionary Damon 43) to come through the brain, down his nerves and into his hand: ‘Come into my hand / By your mild powers descending down the Nerves of my right arm / From out the Portals of my brain’ (63). This bodily description of inspiration scientizes the aesthetic/spiritual experience of poetic creation, reflecting the confidence with which Blake fuses his own ideas with Hartlean images. Like Hartley, we see Blake imagining the brain and nerves as at once spiritual and physical. The brain is ‘where by your ministry / The Eternal Great Humanity Divine planted his Paradise’ (63). It is both the physical organ and a transcendent place. More specifically, Milton’s brain is made important in the poem, even in his new body in Eternity. In a semi-baptismal act, Urizen pours ‘icy fluid’ from the river Jordon on to Milton’s brain, hoping this will stop his progress (87). This sense of being able to control the body through the brain is also relevant to Satan who has a ‘nervous fine wrought Brain’ (78),<sup>23</sup> which Leutha claims to have entered ‘night after night / Like sweet perfume’ (77). These descriptions emphasize the porous and delicate nature of the organ, which is open to external influence in the way Hartley imagines. Here the brain prevents the complete independence of the sexes from each other, developing Hartley’s concept that the body cannot be independent from outside influences. Relatedly, we may note Blake’s use of the Hartlean word ‘vibrate’ to reference the inevitable transference of energies and emotion: Enitharmon’s ‘Looms vibrate with soft affections’ (69), just as the angry Satan ‘vibrated in the immensity of Space’ (75) and ‘every feather’ of a bird’s ‘throat & breast & wings vibrates with the effluence Divine’ (113). This sense of spiritual or emotional energy being transmitted is emphasized further in Hartlean terms, when Albion can feel Milton’s presence as ‘electric’ as he descends. For Blake, as for Hartley, all of creation is shown to be inter-connected and necessarily impacting on each other in some cosmic sense, through vibrations and energy.

However, Blake also uses Hartlean language and concepts to communicate how the body can be severely limited in the mortal world when not used or perceived in terms of its potential. Therefore, 'each mortal brain is wall'd and moated round / Within' (90) and Blake can be critical of the Lockean-Hartlean way of thinking about the senses. The poet's dislike of the form of empiricism that limits knowledge to what the senses perceive is well-known, and in *Milton* the Females who create the 'Three Classes' of Men with the Males at the furnaces, do so to a song which highlights the limitations of viewing mankind in these terms:

Ah weak & wide astray! Ah shut in narrow doleful form,  
Creeping in reptile flesh upon the bosom of the ground:  
The Eye of Man a little narrow orb, clos'd up & dark,  
Scarcely beholding the great light, conversing with the Void;  
The Ear a little shell, in small volutions shutting out  
All melodies & comprehending only Discord and Harmony;  
The tongue a little moisture fills, a little food it cloy  
A little sound it utters & its cries are faintly heard (67)

This section (which is repeated in *Jerusalem*, revealing Blake's on-going occupation with the subject) demonstrates how the immortals' interpretation of Man (as merely a sum of the five senses) is deprecating, and reflects the way in which sensationalist psychology could restrict the impression of human beings' divinity. The descriptions of Man as 'doleful', 'clos'd', 'dark', 'scarcely beholding' and 'shutting out', as well as the repetition of the words 'narrow' and 'little', demonstrate the distance the creators put between themselves and what they produce. It also disallows any association between humans and the capacity to have vision.<sup>24</sup> The animalistic and naturalistic imagery depicts Man as a type of monster, merely a strange

combination of various other creations. In the 'Preface' of *Europe a Prophecy* (added to the poem in 1795), a more sympathetic approach to the senses was used, where the poet described them in terms of light and knowledge: 'Five windows light the cavern'd Man' (129). In this piece, emphasis laid on what the senses have the potential to enable. Similarly the song of the Females continues in *Milton*, and although these women's tone is still critical, it nevertheless implies humans' capacity for greater experiences if their senses were used differently:

Can such an Eye Judge or the stars? & looking thro' its tubes  
Measure the sunny rays that point their spears on Udanadan?  
Can such an Ear, fill'd with the vapours of the yawning pit,  
Judge of the pure melodius harp struck by a hand divine?  
Can such closed Nostrils feel a joy? or tell of autumn fruits  
When grapes & figs burst their covering to the joyful air?  
Can such a Tongue boast of the living waters? or take in  
Ought but the Vegetable Ratio & loathe the faint delight?  
Can such gross Lips perceive? Alas, folded within themselves  
They touch not ought, but pallid turn & tremble at every wind. (67)

Significantly, the poet himself stands as proof of the human ability to increase his/her visionary capacity and as such, the presence of the poem undermines negative readings of mankind. Thus, answering these questions Foster Damon argues about *Milton*, 'the entire poem is an analysis of the events leading up to the supreme vision' since Blake was interested in the 'opening instead of the closing of the senses' (291). The comment of eighteenth-century French mystic, Louis-Claude Saint-Martin (1743–1803), 'I heard flowers that

sounded, and saw notes that shone' (Saint-Martin qtd in Underhill 7), resonates with Blake's refusal to accept simplistic accounts determining the senses' capabilities. Agreeing with this capacity for mankind to be visionary, are those well-known references in the poem that suggest the divinity of the body: 'every Generated Body in its inward form / Is a garden of delight & a building of magnificence' (105). More particularly Hartlean is the spiritualized description of the fly that reminds us of the relationship Hartley identifies between humans and animals owing to their similar senses and bodies:

Seest thou the little winged fly, smaller than a grain of sand?

It has a heart like thee, a brain open to heaven & hell.

Withinside wondrous & expansive, its gates are not clos'd.

I hope thine are not. (89-92)

The spiritual importance of animals and plants in this poem is also clear when Blake identifies them as the 'Sons of Los', 'the Labourers of the Vintage', and the 'Visions of Eternity' (104), who complete the Harvest and the Vintage. Such radicalism where animals, plants and humans are made sacred and hierarchy is subverted is vital in presenting an egalitarian understanding of all creation that does not distinguish between genders.

Finally, although Blake denounces 'Bacon, Locke & Newton' (those figures whom Hartley drew upon so strongly) and refers to the 'rotten rags of memory' (129), the 'casting off' of their doctrines is done through the Hartlean process of self-annihilation (129). I suggest it is significant that Hartley is not easily grouped with these figures (or Priestley) for Blake. Milton says 'I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration: / To cast off Rational Demonstration [...] To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton' (129). As I have already

suggested, self-annihilation frames *Observations*, being the state to which men and women must aim, and Milton declares his purpose to ‘go down to self annihilation and eternal death’ (81) and so begins his journey. The fact that Ololon is the sole figure to enact the annihilation described by Hartley is important for the poem’s feminism; not only does her presence uphold women’s religious importance and capabilities, but it challenges men like Milton to invest faith in their female counterparts.

### **A Flawed Hero: John Milton**

Blake’s discussions of both self-annihilation and feminism are also highly relevant in a period that was fascinated with John Milton. Morton D. Paley details 1791-1810 as the ‘Miltonic Matrix’ owing to the intense interest in the poet, which initiated a variety of projects about him throughout the 1790s (*Miltonic Matrix* 787). Paley describes *Milton* as addressing ‘two major subjects [...] Milton’s political commitment and his relations with the women in his life’ (*Miltonic Matrix* 786). In particular, this was an age interested to debate Milton’s misogynistic reputation, which had been provoked by Samuel Johnson’s *Life of Milton*. This text, first published in 1779 and reappearing in *Lives of the Poets* in 1783, 1787, 1800, 1801, and 1804 (as well as in some new editions of Milton’s work), had written in strong terms against Milton’s ‘envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; a petulant impatience of control, and pride disdainful of superiority’ (187). However, even more significant was Johnson’s criticisms of the poet’s attitudes towards the women in his family.<sup>25</sup> Paley explains: ‘what Samuel Johnson specifically called ‘Turkish’ was Milton’s treatment of his daughters. The notion of Milton as a patriarchal tyrant was largely based on his compelling two of them to read to him in languages they did not

understand (*Miltonic Matrix* 794). In 1791, Milton's will was published, contributing to his misogynistic image by revealing his hostility to his daughters whom he tried to disinherit (*Miltonic Matrix* 795). Milton had written: 'The portion due to me from Mr Powell, my former wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, having received no part of it; but my meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion and what I have besides done for them, they have been very undutiful to me' (Milton qtd Paley, *Milton Matrix* 795). Despite a reference to 'Elizabeth, my loving wife', another important anecdote gaining currency was of Milton's wife begging her husband's forgiveness on her knees. This image was depicted by Blake's friend, Henry Fuseli, (Paley, *Milton Matrix* 794), and Johnson's severe critique led Blake and his contemporaries to debate Milton's character. William Hayley,<sup>26</sup> Edward Phillips, John Toland and Jonathan Richardson all responded to Johnson's judgement, focusing on the issue of Milton's wife and daughters (Paley, *Miltonic Matrix* 794-795). Such an atmosphere of controversy surrounding the poet and women is important to recall when approaching Blake's poem, and makes significant its treatment of gender. This general interest in Milton's attitudes towards women emerges from a Hartlean culture that was sensitive to their treatment and rights. John Milton's unsympathetic character lent itself to *Milton*, which is a poem about the protagonist's great need for self-annihilation.

That Blake's own views of Milton could be critical is reflected in his well-known interest to correct the poet's ideas. He told Crabb Robinson that Milton had asked him "to shew the falsehood of his doctrine that the pleasure of sex arose from the / fall." (Blake qtd Beer, *Humanism* 31). Anne Mellor explains particularly clearly (and very much in terms of gender) why the poet cannot be considered in simply heroic terms for Blake:



According to Blake, the poet Milton failed to embody the divine humanity and to become a true poet-prophet because, first, he obeyed the dead literary conventions of the past, those Classical Greek and Roman models that are mere “daughters of memory” rather than the living inspiration of the Old and New Testament prophecies; second he indulged his selfish desire for fame, complete authority over his wives and daughters, and slavish devotion from his admirers (in Blake’s terminology, he became a spectrous selfhood); and third, he cruelly denied the sexual and emotional needs of his wives and daughters; he neither loved nor understood his emanations. (Mellor, *Form Divine* 219)

Although appreciating Blake’s affection for his predecessor, I argue that Blake purposefully parodies the more typical redemption narrative by presenting an obviously flawed hero, who does not significantly develop in virtue or kindness throughout the narrative. The often-ignored flaws the artist-poet depicts in his protagonist emerge from the contemporary criticism surrounding John Milton that readers of the time were likely to recognize. Blake focuses on Milton’s misogynistic stance and his masculinized love of status, and both these relate to Milton’s lack of emotion. The protagonist is presented as a purposefully older, pre-Romantic version of masculinity that must journey to self-annihilation and change.

The presence of this flawed hero is also vital in suggesting the importance of women and the feminine. Milton may only reach wholeness when he accepts the female in all its manifestations. In the poem, the humble qualities of pity, forgiveness, self-sacrifice and persistent love are more readily associated with the feminine. Furthermore, these are most able to inspire acts of bravery and heroism since they are relational, generous and outside capitalist ideology. They contrast with the masculine, self-focused pleasures visible within Milton’s character such as ambition, revenge and love of status. By orientating the epic around the Hartlean concept of self-annihilation, but depicting this as reliant on feminine

qualities, the discussion of virtue, goodness and gender is all the more important and obvious. It also becomes clear why only Ololon reaches the state of self-annihilation. This establishes an important comparison between the journeys of Milton, Satan, and Ololon, all of whom partake in seeking or finding annihilation in some way. The following part of this chapter will examine Milton, Satan, and Ololon, to show how their contrasting characters makes for a pro-feminine and pro-women, piece of writing. Vital to my argument are Milton's attitudes towards women, Satan's various associations with the feminine, and Ololon's power as a female figure in the poem. The figures will be examined in terms of their gender performance and relations with the female. I will start my discussion by looking at how Milton's treatment of women denies him the ability to begin his own self-annihilation, despite his desire of reaching this state. This will be contrasted with the heroic status (and female nature) of Satan, and the 'Hartlean heroism' of Ololon.

Milton's complex relationships with women are made significant from the opening scene of Book the First where the reader encounters Blake's attitudes towards his 'Sixfold Emanation'.<sup>27</sup> Here the protagonist's limited emotional capacity, especially as this relates to women, is made central because we see Milton ignoring the Emanation's suffering for one hundred years, preferring his academic pursuits.

Say first! what mov'd Milton-who walk'd about in Eternity  
One hundred years, pondering the intricate mazes of Providence,  
Unhappy tho' in heav'n, he obey'd, he murmured not, he was silent  
Viewing his Sixfold Emanation scatter'd thro the deep  
In torment- to go into the deep her to redeem & himself perish?  
[...]  
A Bard's prophetic song! (63)

Milton only chooses to embark on a rescue mission because of the bard's song, a piece of prophecy that describes Satan's ambition, his consequent fall, and his emotional frustration. This reveals Milton's lack of sympathy for his Emanation, and draws attention to his pride, since he is motivated only by identification against his Spectre, Satan, to undertake what he knows will be an heroic journey. In Heaven Milton had been 'pondering the intricate mazes of Providence' (63), further revealing that like the real John Milton, he has a relentless ambition and pride, preferring to solve theological questions than display empathy to women. Blake creates a figure who allows women to suffer and be subjugated in the pursuit of his philosophy and himself.

Blake recalls how Milton used his work to enforce patriarchal control:

They sat rang'd round him as the rocks of Horeb round the land  
Of Canaan, and they wrote in thunder, smoke, and fire  
His dictate; and his body was the Rock Sinai: (84)

The dictations completed by Milton's daughters ignited much controversy regarding his alleged misogyny, and Blake uses these heated debates to emphasize the man's self-regard. The reference to 'Sinai' also brings to mind Milton as an oppressive law-giver and Moses-figure. Validating this image, the Emanations are later afraid of Milton: after their release from Ololon, she [sic] reports: 'Terribly this Portion trembles before thee, O awful Man' (130). It is interesting that Milton does not ask forgiveness from his Emanations or seek to compensate their suffering. Rather, they take responsibility for his guilt themselves, the typical gesture of oppressed womanhood dating back to Eve. Although hiding on the banks of

Ololon since 'Milton drove [them] / Down into Ulro' (91) they 'lamented that they had in wrath & fury & fire / Driven Milton into Ulro' (92).

According to Foster Damon, Blake's Emanation is the 'feminine portion or "counterpart" of the fundamentally bisexual male', and it is important to the poem that in Eternity the Individual is 'complete again' through absorption (but not annihilation) of the female back into the male (Foster Damon, *Dictionary* 120). Such a claim has a vital feminist aspect, since Emanations are needed for the Brotherhood of Man and for union with God (Foster Damon, *Dictionary* 120-121), so Blake's work is always dedicated to engaging with how the sexes can better unite to achieve harmony with the divine. It is for this reason that Milton's Emanation is Sixfold, standing for Milton's three wives and his three daughters: 'Blake believed that Milton had not solved the problems of sex, that he had not lived in perfect harmony with his family, and therefore that they still remained divided from him' (Foster Damon, *Symbols* 404). As such, Milton is 'not made whole, since he is still divided' (411) and this shapes the poem's narrative where he 'must return (though not in flesh) to redeem his error' (Foster Damon, *Symbols* 404). Reminding us of Hayes' work on androgyny, the scholar agrees that by finding his Emanation, Milton will 'relieve the world from that false ideal' that the sexes should be separate (411).

Interestingly, however, throughout the poem Milton's largest problem is still his inability to accept or create bonds with women. This is reason why Christopher Z. Hobson states that 'Sexual division in general is a major theme in *Milton*' and he identifies the presence of male homosexuality in the poem (128). The disconnection Milton creates between himself and the feminine is used by the poet to demonstrate how the protagonist limits his own divinity: Milton refuses to develop himself in the manner Hartley suggests. In this way, one's positive treatment of women could be added to Hartley's philosophy as

another source of pleasure to be acquired for bringing the person towards perfection. The poem explicitly relates Milton's oppression of women to his selfishness, since this figure's 'quest' involves liberating the Emanations, only by giving up his selfhood:

In those three females, whom his Wives, & those three whom his  
Daughters  
Had represented and contain'd, that they might be resum'd  
By giving up selfhood (84)

This relates to self-annihilation because Milton's main problem is his self-focused approach to life, which informs his relentless ambition and his emotional detachment from others, especially women. Hartley, like Blake, regards inability to sympathize, selfishness, and relentless ambition, as inevitably related. This is why the process of refining the passions towards theopathy and benevolence is necessarily gradual and difficult. In terms of Hartley's 'scale of perfection' (II:275), Milton is trapped in the third and fourth classes of pleasures, ambition and self-interest, neither of which ought to be made a primary pursuit. Milton's inability to develop and achieve self-annihilation is also related to his underlying misogyny. These flaws of Blake's protagonist are often ignored and focus centres on the figure's progressive nature that is considered to be acquired by the end of the poem. However, Blake represents the subordination of women and in so doing disseminates a feminist message, rather than offering a more simple study of Milton's self-discovery.

Milton's treatment of Ololon reminds readers of William Hayley's description of Milton, which would have been well-known to those interested in the poet: 'He thought woman made only for obedience, and man for rebellion' (Hayley qtd Paley, *Miltonic Matrix*

793). As will be seen later in this chapter, Ololon has special powers and associations with both Jesus and Los. She also enables Milton's liberation. His refusal and inability to see her talents is significant and Blake uses the relationship between Milton and Ololon to highlight how the protagonist's misogyny prevents his own spiritual learning or his self-annihilation.

Milton's patriarchal dominance is clear in their first meeting when 'in terrible majesty' he commands the female: "'Obey thou the Words of the Inspired Man [...] I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration'" (128,129); the authoritative, self-aggrandising manner in which he then delivers his prophecy is notably similar to the speech of his Spectre, Satan, who, directly preceding this Ololon-Milton encounter, had said: "I am God the judge of all, the living & the dead / Fall therefore down & worship me; submit" (125). The content of Milton's sermon to Ololon is therefore ironic to the reader, since his wisdom is based on an understanding that Ololon already possesses. In particular, he discusses the importance of self-annihilation, yet Ololon is the figure most comfortable with annihilating herself and taking many forms. He also comments on the importance of faith in the Saviour, despite the fact she is more closely connected to Jesus herself, and ready to follow his example. When Ololon replies to her aggressor, it is to question the separation Milton places between them: 'Are we contraries, O Milton, Thou & I?' (130); Ololon is humble, and here appears to Milton in her most modest state: a twelve year old, timid virgin. As Storch has claimed, somewhat sardonically, 'Her positive quality proceeds from the fact that she is a woman rendered harmless to men [...] we have a submissive and innocent twelve-year-old virgin, who can appeal sensuously to men without threatening them' (140).

While Storch views Ololon's appearance as supporting a 'male' who is 'active and potent' and 'has realized the full strength of his masculinity and has overcome the menace of female power' (140), I argue that this choice of appearance shows Ololon outside of a

competitive ideology, and more interested to activate progression. Ololon's poignant questions still show the female attempting to challenge male thinking, and since there is no sense that her words are respected by Milton (who gives no answer), he only reveals his ongoing lack of vision and an inability to develop himself (130). Emphasising this, his attitude is contrasted to the inspired poet, who at Felpham demonstrates his own veneration of the girl and knowledge of her significance. He says: 'Virgin of Providence [...] What is thy message to thy friend? What am I now to do? / [...] Behold me / Ready to obey, but pity thou my Shadow of Delight' (121). The manner in which the poet reveres Ololon and also asks for her protection of his own wife, 'my shadow of delight', demonstrates his more enlightened attitudes to women, as a more modern figure who can recognize their potential.

Milton's natural tendency to exert power over women exposes his insatiable desire for status. Such a need disallows the figure to empathize or recognize women's value, and forces him to emotionally detach in favour of pursuing that which can most advance his privilege. In particular, Milton still hopes to be a religious leader or knowledge-bearer like his Earthly self. The speech to Ololon when they meet reveals him trying to be her spiritual guide, rather than learning from her. His language is prophetic: 'All that can be, can be annihilated, must be annihilated / That the children of Jerusalem may be saved from slavery' (129). By fashioning himself as a spiritual teacher, who understands the meaning of his own acts and their consequence, Milton appropriates the important figure of the prophet. Moreover, he seizes the Christ-like image for himself. His words are not mediated through Christ and he continually refers to his act of self-annihilation, seemingly fascinated by the power this could give him, and believing that through its achievement, he could personally set example and in a Christ-like manner begin the process of 'setting the children of Jerusalem free' or revolutionising the law that Satan has laid down: 'Mine is to teach Men to despise death [...]

laughing to scorn Thy Laws & terrors' (125). The sense of his appropriation of Christ's mission is at its height in the full plate dedicated to the line: 'To Annihilate the Self-hood of Deceit & False Forgiveness' (83) (see appendix). This plate shows Albion in the humble sacrificial gesture of Jesus on the cross, however, at the same time, the tablets of law are grasped by Milton, seeming to symbolize him destructing Law and Sin, like Christ. Milton is placing himself in the position of Jesus, yet Albion's equally Christ-like pose suggests Milton's superfluous and presumptuous act here. Albion's sacrificial gesture and suffering face suggest his weakness. He is also one already initiating the deconstruction process himself.

As these readings imply, for Milton, self-annihilation is made paradoxically self-centred and disparate from the underlying aims of selfless benevolence. The selfless and relational qualities of self-annihilation were familiar to a readership aware of Hartlean theory; in this context, Milton's lack would indicate his inadequacy for the achievement of this type of perfection. Milton confirms his selfish desires when he says he seeks self-annihilation because ' "This is a false Body, an Incrustation over my Immortal / Spirit, a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated away." ' (129). The protagonist is interested in achieving selflessness as personal purification from his 'Selfhood', and for the subsequent freedom to be divine: 'To cleanse the Face of my Spirit by Self-examination / To bathe in the Waters of Life, to wash off the Not Human; / I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration' (129). His self-centred approach is most obvious in his first speech about Satan, where he reveals his hopes of gaining power and control, rather than risk losing it in true self-annihilation: " "In my obedience to loose him from my Hells / To claim the Hells, my furnaces, I go to Eternal Death" " (81). Referring to 'Eternal Death' three times in this one short speech, and clarifying further that his task is 'to go on / In fearless majesty annihilating



Self, laughing to scorn / Thy laws and terrors', also to 'put off / In Self-annihilation all that is not of God alone' (125), Milton reveals his ambition for heroism and the spiritual beauty that is solely self-referential. His most passionate speech sees him accusing and taunting his apparent counterpart, Satan, when they meet; during the onslaught, Milton is self-righteous and unbending, reflecting his assurance in his own role as triumphant antagonist: 'Satan! my Spectre! I know my power thee to annihilate / And be greater in thy place' (125). Interestingly, Milton's arrogant method of reaching self-annihilation is to eliminate that which he sees as error in the Spectre, rather than in himself. Yet unlike Satan, Milton has confidence in his future success, and the reader knows he will succeed due to Los' faith in the prophecy: Los had 'recollected an old Prophecy, in Eden recorded / And often sung to the loud harp at the immortal feasts, / That Milton of the Land of Albion should up ascent [...] and set free / Orc from his Chain of Jealousy' (90-91). However, rather than being humble, Milton continually enjoys his power, and states proudly to Satan:

I come to discover before Heav'n & Hell the Self-righteousness  
In all its Hypocritic turpitude, opening to every eye  
These wonders of Satan's holiness, shewing to the Earth  
The Idol Virtues of the Natural Heart (125)

For the reader, the irony here is important, since it is Milton who is the truly self-righteous figure, believing himself pure and genuine, against his belief in Satan's artifice and pride.

Milton's own self-flattering comparison between his mission, and the mission of Satan, reveals him using this Spectre to feel ever more powerful and proud:

Thy purpose & the purpose of thy Priests & of thy Churches

Is to impress on men the fear of death, to teach  
Trembling & fear, terror constriction, abject selfishness.  
Mine is to teach Men to despise death & to go on  
In fearless majesty annihilating Self, laughing to scorn  
Thy Laws & terrors (125)

The emphasis on the word 'Mine' displays his satisfaction in this role as knowledge-bearer, teacher and saviour; again then, he is a figure much like the authoritative poet of *Paradise Lost* imparting his doctrine; his way of speaking sounds Biblical yet his dialogue is unmediated by Jesus or God. Milton's underlying ambition in achieving self-annihilation is to gain the control and the spiritual insight that this would entail. Incidentally, the sole reason he eventually does not annihilate Satan, is not due to his mercy, but instead because he feels this will prove his superiority; although stating that he has the ability to eliminate Satan he says he will not because: 'Such are the Laws of thy false Heav'ns; but Laws of Eternity / Are not such' (125). Milton's attitude towards Ololon and Satan reveal him wishing to be religiously influential in the minds of others by asserting his new ideas. The desire to be religiously innovative was also the desire of John Milton, who was considered by Blake to be the cause and greatest exponent of Puritanism (Foster Damon, *Poetry and Symbols* 418). This shows Blake continually matching his own protagonist to the idea of the real poet, and doing so within the context of self-annihilation. Considering Milton's dedication to self-annihilation in the poem, it is purposefully ironic that he forfeits his identity the least, and instead remains so similar to his earthly identity in terms of his flaws.

## Satan the Hero and His Female Potential

Both Satan and Ololon are far more successful in attempting and understanding the meaning of self-annihilation. Their own acts of this annihilation and their more relational ways of existing are important in the overall discussion of gender and self-annihilation: Satan possesses feminine qualities and Ololon is a powerful woman; both characters enable others' rescue as well as risking themselves. Considering these two figures highlights their difference to Milton and reveals the artist-poet's feminist attitudes.

Satan acts as a mid-point between Milton and Ololon since he attempts self-annihilation without reaching it, and is associated with the feminine in his personality, actions and relationships with females. It is only the female figure, Ololon, who actually achieves and lives out the process of self-annihilation. She also embraces feminine qualities as part of her womanhood. Yet Satan is still heroic for his attempt, since he risks experiencing the anger and contempt of others and places himself in the path of annihilation. His emotional behaviour leads him to be rejected from Eternity until finally, 'He sunk down a dreadful Death, unlike the slumbers of Beulah (74) and it is declared that he is 'fall'n from his station & never can be redeem'd' (76). Unlike Milton, the reader can engage easily with Satan from the beginning of the poem, specifically because of his ingenuous expressions of feeling, which are dependent on how others treat him. Satan is admirable because he is true to his own emotions and feelings regardless of how this harms him. He is not interested in saving his life, but prefers to take risks in order to receive the treatment he feels he deserves. Like Milton's own Satan from *Paradise Lost*, so Blake's Satan is ambitious in the face of adversity, and brave despite being sure of his impending defeat. We should consider here that although the poem is called *Milton: a Poem*, Blake's famous aphorism in the earlier poem,

*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, that Milton was ‘a true Poet and of the Devil’s party without knowing it’ (Blake 49) is important, since, like his predecessor, Blake consciously attracts positive attention and admiration to Satan’s journey to make him heroic.

A reading of Satan as heroic or admirable departs from mainstream criticism of the figure. Margaret Storch’s explanation of the poem points to the reasons for traditionally held views of the piece: ‘*Milton* received its impetus from one of the most tormented periods of Blake’s life: the three years from September 1800 to September 1803 that he spent at Felpham, Sussex, as an assistant to William Hayley, an inferior poet who lacked the insight to appreciate Blake’s genius’ (131). Blake’s experience of Hayley made him especially ‘bitter’, since this paternal figure had severely disappointed his aspirations and hopes. Storch refers to the ‘quarrels with Hayley, quarrels that are allegorically dramatized in *Milton*’ (132), and she offers a strong reading of Satan, Palambron and Milton, which shows how the various figures share the qualities of Hayley or Blake. Evidencing the historical accuracy of her reading, Storch cites Blake’s letter to Thomas Butts where he had written about Hayley: ‘I am now certain of what I have long doubted Viz [*that H*] is jealous as Stothard was & will be no further My friend than he is compell’d by circumstances. The truth is As a poet he is frightened at me & as a Painter his views and mine are opposite’ (132). Similarly Foster Damon is clear that the disagreement between Hayley and Blake ‘became the Satan-Palambron quarrel which opens *Milton*’ (177). He continues:

Translating it into temporal terms, it becomes evident that Hayley had quite disrupted Blake’s great work; that Blake astonished Hayley with accusations; Hayley wept, blamed Blake’s temper, mentioned ingratitude, and finally lost his own temper. In the final silence that ensued, Mrs. Blake intervened; and the two men agreed to part as friends. (177)

This imagined idea of Hayley corresponds directly to Satan's response to his enemies in the poem *Milton*: 'Meanwhile wept Satan before Los, accusing Palambron, / Himself exculpating with mildest speech, for himself believ'd / That he had not oppress'd nor injur'd' (71). Foster Damon's discussion of the emotional personality of Hayley reflects this image of Satan, particularly his disbelief:

The obtuse Hayley was astounded. He had always won friends, even the devotion of such difficult persons as Cowper and Romney; and proud of his benevolence, the lonely man never dreamed that his friendship with Blake had been too demanding. After all, who was Blake? An unsuccessful engraver, whose work was not always satisfactory. (177)

Foster Damon undermines the connection between Satan and Hayley by emphasising that, for Blake, this quarrel 'was a cosmic tragedy, not just because it happened to him, but because it happened at all, and shall repeat itself whenever a genius is under domination of a pretender to his art' (*Dictionary* 177). As a dispute with such high stakes, a quarrel between friends turned into a significant theme for an epic poem.

Hayley's character is at the heart of Foster Damon's argument and is also the basis for many popular readings of the poem. Morris Eaves' work focuses on the character of Hayley to explain the striking personality of Satan: 'Poet, connoisseur, and man of letters, Hayley is the only friend of Blake's to appear in his myth, as the equivocal figure of Satan in *Milton*' (27). He 'was a complex person, generous, enthusiastic, domineering, eccentric' (27), yet

alongside introducing him to friends and commissioning art and drawing lessons, Hayley demeaned Blake by not buying any of his work or illuminated books, and not allowing him the time to develop his own creative projects. Eaves explains that ‘Hayley objected to Blake’s taking time for anything but “the meer drudgery of business”, and Blake, kept from his own painting and writing by Hayley’s demands, fell into a deep depression and began to lose his mental poise’ (28).

Owing to the complex relationship, Blake was ‘in two minds about Hayley’ (Foster Damon, *Dictionary* 178). Foster Damon presents the competing ideas of Hayley and Blake’s own confusing feelings: ‘One side recognised his unusual generosity (which had kept the Blakes from starving), his support of the arts, and his great capacity for friendship [...] Blake’s letters of gratitude were perfectly sincere’ (Foster Damon, *Dictionary* 178). However, ‘the other side of himself despised himself for writing them’, especially since Hayley was ‘domineering’ and too ‘blandly self-assured’ (178). These competing feelings caused ‘the person of Hayley grew into the figure of Satan, the epitome of all errors’ (Foster Damon, *Dictionary* 178).

The tensions and conflicts surrounding the figure of Hayley are illuminating since, like Satan, he cannot be seen as a wholly negative figure. In the same way Satan signifies textually beyond the person of Hayley and is not a direct representation of the man. Discussing this dual aspect to the poem that combines historical detail and fiction, Mary Lynn Johnson asks, ‘Is biography, then, the key to *Milton*? Only a handful of family and friends could have guessed what Felpham meant to Blake, or spotted “Lambeth” and “South Molton Street” [...] or detected Hayley’s “Genteel Ignorance & Polite Disapprobation”’ (236). She insists, ‘suppose these facts had never come to light. Blake, like artists in many

fields, then and now, wove private allusions into his work that he probably never expected readers to recognise. And for the most important symbols, he includes interpretive contexts within the work itself' (236). Similarly, Northrop Frye acknowledges the allegory the Satan-Palambron quarrel represents, but nevertheless allows for an expansive reading of the poem: 'If we know anything of Blake's biography, we can see that the Bard's Song can be partly interpreted from it: Palambron is Blake, Satan is Hayley, Blake's wife is Elynittria, the emanation of Palambron' (*Symmetry* 325). Notwithstanding this, 'It is not necessary to know much of this in order to understand the poem, and by the time we reach the end we are forced to conclude that the Satan of the twenty-seven Heavens and the forty-eight deformed Human Wonders of the Almighty has got rather beyond the eighteenth century author of *The Triumphs of Temper*' (325). Frye comments further that 'The readiness of even sympathetic readers to confuse a poet's life and his imagination seems to be based on the assumption that the life is real and the poetry a by-product, so that to search for biography in poetry is, from this point of view, searching for the reality under disguise' (326). By liberating the character Satan from a biographical reading, the reader can recognize how he contrasts Milton; it also becomes evident that Satan shares aspects of Ololon and the feminine. This character-based analysis produces an important interpretation of the poem regarding heroism and emotion, and helps to draw out the feminist meaning of the poem. The current research has faith in the literary text to express meaning itself since 'we should hardly expect to find that in writing *Milton* Blake turned his back on his whole theory of inspiration, which refuses all importance to any part of a writer's personality except his creative imagination' (Frye, *Symmetry* 327).

One of the most interesting aspects of Blake's depiction of Satan is how he has connections to 'the feminine' in his emotional behaviour and subject position. His outbursts frame him as a Wollstonecraft figure that is unable to contain strong feelings. Yet he also has

associations with women who love and defend him. He is the cause for Pity to be brought into an otherwise masculine Eternity, a feeling that is gendered female in Blake's work (having first divided Los, to become Enitharmon, the first separate female in *The Book of Urizen*) (Foster Damon, *Dictionary* 327). The consideration of Satan as a disenfranchised figure (and therefore needing love and admiration) also puts him in a feminine subject position. Satan does not conform to the nineteenth-century model of masculinity, but rather appears as a more old-fashioned, emotional version of manhood: Johnson reminds us that Jane Austen's *Emma* represents the cultural moment when less emotionalized figures of masculinity were newly admired against earlier more sentimental concepts of manhood (*Equivocal Beings* 199). The contrast between Satan and Milton engages the readers in contemplating the true nature of masculinity, especially in terms of annihilation and heroism which emerge as such significant themes. It also makes more crucial the poem's end when Ololon takes precedence as Saviour. Recalling her position, we can see that Satan stands in between Milton and Ololon: he has both noticeably male and female qualities (perhaps because he has no Emanation), and he nearly annihilates himself. Interestingly, although he acts without the purpose of serving others, his actions inevitably help figures in the poem who are motivated to goodness through the threat he symbolizes. It was Satan's history, told within the bard's song, which motivated Milton's own decision to rescue the Emanation; Los showed great pity to Milton owing to this quest; finally, the wives and daughters also sought to protect their saviour, Milton, and rescue him.

The bard's history of Satan also demonstrated that in stark contrast to Milton, Satan shares his honest and dramatic outbursts. This behaviour is maintained throughout his journey owing to his ongoing sense of thwarted ambition. Contrary to Milton's older way of thinking, Satan wishes to alter the circumstances that form him. This shows his awareness of



how his body, senses, and experiences, create his identity. Satan becomes a 'post-Hartlean' figure whose behaviour relates to what Kramnick calls Hartley's 'optimistic materialism', that is, the idea that according to Hartley and Priestley's necessitarian worldview, circumstances could be engineered to dictate development and opportunity (Kramnick 16, Allen 434).<sup>28</sup>

Unlike the hyper-masculinized figure of Milton, Satan already has a female subject position at his creation since he enters a masculine environment and is subordinated and disempowered. Satan's responsive rebellion against authority can be seen as justified because his identity is allocated rather than chosen: 'At last Enitharmon brought forth Satan Refusing Form in vain:/The Miller of Eternity made subservient to the Great Harvest, /That he may go to his own Place, Prince of the Starry Wheels (65). The idea of Satan 'Refusing Form', despite the obvious impossibility of this ('in vain'), prepares the reader for an insatiably aspirational character who abhors being limited, even by his own body. However, that he is 'made subservient' refers to the closed and imposing atmosphere of Eternity that does not allow for personal choice. This is represented clearly in Satan's fall when the character's anger originates his sense of injustice at not being permitted to select his role in Eternity. Satan must work at the mills, which is specifically described as the 'subservient' task (65), but he is desirous of driving the Harrow - the role of his brother Palambron. In response to his request to change position, Palambron, and then Los, deny Satan his aspiration. Los aims to dissuade Satan's ambitions by nourishing his ego with compliments. However, when Satan perseveres, Los becomes angry and tyrannical, refusing all debate: 'Satan was going to reply, but Los roll'd his loud thunders' (66); in a particularly hostile manner he rebukes his son and ends the discussion by saying: 'Get to thy Labours at the mills [...] Anger me not! [...] Trouble me no more, thou canst not have Eternal Life' (66). The unbending nature of Los'

words recalls the Calvinist discourse of predestination (which appears throughout the poem) and evokes the reader's sympathy and interest in Satan's battle. Los' complicity in these Calvinist concepts (which are specifically non-Hartlean, and non-Blakean), can only make Satan seem all the more justified in his anger and frustration against an unfair system. It contributes to the sense of him as the more modern figure. Satan fights against Los' decision and finally acquires the harrow, and in this portrayal of his rebellion, Blake uses the period's increasingly common depictions of Satan as the oppressed, charismatic revolutionary.<sup>29</sup> As such, his (inevitable) failure to cope with the more difficult task evokes pity more than contempt, with Satan being framed as a highly human figure, and Aristotle's tragic hero.<sup>30</sup>

Satan's humanity also lies within his intense emotions that he is unable to contain for feeling them so deeply. In the Bard's powerful account of his rebellion in Heaven, the readers see Satan at his most sensitive: he is at once, 'terrified, overlaboured & astonished' (69), yet he also shows his 'incomparable mildness', 'extreme mildness' and 'endearing love', which are more conventionally feminine (69). The love Satan shows to Palambron is also gendered feminine because caused by Leutha's entrance into his brain (77), and when Satan creates the deadly sins, this is said to be influenced by women. Satan's emotion is only his own during his most prominent display of unhappiness, revealed through his continual weeping. In response to Palambron's tiredness, he 'Embrac'd soft with a brother's tears Palambron' (69), in Los' rejection of his request for a new station, 'Satan trembling obey'd, weeping along the way' (66). He 'wept' when he is called with Palambron to Los, because 'accus'd of crimes' (70); when Los tells Palambron 'Henceforce, Palambron, let each his own station / Keep' (70), Satan again 'wept [...] before Los' (71). After the disorder in his own mills, he 'return'd to Los, not fill'd with vengeance but with tears, Himself convinc'd of Palambron's turpitude' (71). Finally 'Satan wept over Palambron' because of the quarrel (72). While the genuineness

of some of these emotions may be in question, the sense of his emotional immaturity and inability to contain his feelings is clear; when Theortormon and Bromion take his side after the quarrel with Palambron, this is because of his 'youth' as well as his 'beauty' (72). This constant display of sadness and feeling in these various circumstances presents Satan in the style of the sentimental, emotional male, popular at the end of the eighteenth-century, but declining in fashion throughout the nineteenth century. I suggest that Satan cannot be tolerated in Eternity because he exists through his emotions and feelings, rather than in terms of prescribed laws and duties.

The variety of emotions Satan experiences gives the reader access into his humanness and inevitably invests him/her in Satan's journey, more than the journey of Milton who remains guarded and controlled. The preceding emotions Satan experiences explain his actions, and he is shown to be jealous, frustrated, angry and sad at the various situations he finds himself in. The genuine nature of Satan's emotions is indicated in their developments: at the beginning of the poem, Satan is delicate, vulnerable, and upset. After his rejection by Michael, Thulloh, and Rintrah, he is hardened. In response to Rintrah's anger and Michael's tears, he 'stood angry & red' (72); he kills his friend Thulloh who had 'also reprov'd him' (72) and threatens Michael, again crying after these acts (72). He is unable to control his feelings but immediately acts on them. When judgment is passed on rage, it only increases this feeling within him so it 'now flam'd high and furious in Satan against Palambron' (73). The experience of being judged leads him to 'fury' (73) and he chooses to leave his family: 'I rend this accursed Family from my covering' (73). By the time he encounters Milton in the last part of the poem, sadness has become anger: he is 'hung'ring to devour' Milton and 'howls [...] as a lion round his prey' (126). Yet his ambitions remain, and 'He stood upon the waves' to 'loud roll his thunders against Milton' but he knows Milton is indestructible: 'Not

daring to touch one fibre' (124). His frustration in not being able to touch his antagonist means that 'his torment is unendurable' (126) and he 'howl'd round upon the Sea' (124). The emotional access we have to the figure is unique in the poem, and inevitably draws the readers closer so that they are much more invested and interested in his aspirations than those of Milton. When the self-assured and proud Milton derides Satan, the reader is interested to see the impact this will have, especially since Satan is destined to fail.

Pathos is aroused for Satan because his intentions, although selfish, are genuine and he is seen to act immediately on the basis of how he feels. Before Satan is introduced, Los argues for the importance of expressing inner feelings: "If you account it Wisdom when you are angry to be silent, and / Not to shew it, I do not account that wisdom, but Folly. Every Man's Wisdom is peculiar to his own Individuality" (65). However, in practise, emotion and individuality are not valued in Heaven, particularly the emotion and individuality of Satan. Instead, people assume his artifice: Palambron charges Satan with insincerity: 'He hath assum'd my place [...] under pretence of pity and love to me!' (70); Rintrah reproves him for 'dissimulation of friendship' (72); Los argues that Satan helped Palambron through, 'pity false' and 'officious brotherhood, where None needs, be active' (an accusation which causes Satan's tears) (70). However, the poet is not clear that Satan is false. Despite the disorder he causes to Palambron, even this figure confesses that Satan is 'Seeming a brother, being a tyrant, even thinking himself a brother' (70). Satan believes that he cares for Palambron, offering to take his station because he 'return'd with labour wearied every evening' (69); his entreaties are 'soft' and initially, the brother does not complain because he does not want to be accused of 'Ingratitude' (69). Satan cries when accused of crimes because he 'self believ'd' his innocence (70). The Gnomes also inevitably reference Satan's good intentions and genuine feelings in their criticisms; they blame Satan, not for being false, but for the bad

effects of his feelings: they ‘curs’d Satan bitterly’ for doing ‘unkind things in kindness! With power arm’d, to say / The most irritating things in the midst of tears and love’ (78). My reading of this line focuses on Satan’s ability to provoke negative reactions because he does not predict the resentment of others. I view the figure as unfortunate in how he communicates his positive internal emotions, rather than seeing him as feigning kind emotions. Interestingly, it is only when Satan withdraws from his family in fury that his emotions suddenly become unintelligible. It is at this point that he has the potential to be deceptive. His rejection leads him to withdraw so that: ‘Satan rag’d amidst the Assembly, and his bosom grew / Opaque against the Divine Vision; the paved terraces of / His bosom inwards shone with fires, but the stones becoming opaque / Hid him from sight, in an extreme blackness and darkness [...] Satan’s bosom a vast unfathomable Abyss’ (74). He suddenly ‘stood opaque immeasurable’ and with a ‘hidden heart’ (74). In Eternity, good intentions based on feelings are not valued, tolerated or forgiven if they lead to difficulty, and Satan’s final emotional withdrawal is the effect of such a system. Those who listen to the Bard’s song notice this problem and ‘many condemn’d the high-toned Song, Saying “Pity and Love are too venerable for the imputation of Guilt.”’ (80). Like the listeners, attentive readers may feel pity and admiration for Satan who is dismissed for his lack of conformity and his emotional transparency.

Only the masculinized characters Milton, Rintrah and Palambron never feel pity. Los learns pity as a later consequence of Satan’s actions and so allows Milton to ‘let loose Satan’ (96) (and therefore risk the annihilation of himself) (95). He declares that ‘we live not by wrath, by mercy alone we live!’ (96). In response, Palambron and Rintrah are furious, only seeing mercy as weakness. They remind him that he is ‘Pitying and permitting evil, tho’ strong & mighty to destroy’ (94). Unable to convince their father towards anger, ‘Furious

they descended [...] Indignant [...] They saw that wrath now sway'd and now pity absor'd him' (98). The inability of Rintrah and Palambron to show pity renders them oppressive figures. It is significant then that pity is gendered female in Blake's work, and pity is revealed to be outside (masculine) Eternity's value system. The more feminine Satan is the only figure who understands pity rather than wrath: 'And Satan not having the Science of Wrath, but only of Pity / Rent them asunder' (74). As we will see in the next section, only women are able to express and act on their compassion for others. This represents the poem's celebration of the feminine. Yet the poem also expresses that any figure has the capacity to enact female-identified behaviours to promote an emotion-based benevolence. This means sacrificing the self, where mercy and forgiveness precede acts of self-focused heroism.

### ***Milton's Female Saviours***

The only research to explicitly discuss the role of women in *Milton* is "*A Portion of his Life*": *William Blake's Miltonic Vision of Women* (1994) by Eugenie Freed. Although her study is more descriptive than analytic, Freed sees the poem as interested to depict Milton's poor relationships with the women in his life.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, the submission and apologies of Ololon to Milton are compared to the submission and apology of Mary Powell to John Milton during their marriage (as already mentioned). However, Freed still presents Blake as critical of women, rather than promoting a feminist message. She writes: 'As Blake perceived it, one of the long-term effects of the smouldering domestic insurrection in John Milton's household was that a "feminine principle" essential to creativity was distorted or inadequately represented in Milton's creative life' (78). She believes that the poem represents this absence through the Sixfold Emanation, who 'instead of dedicating themselves, as a united feminine

“contrary,” to sustaining and complementing the labors of a divinely inspired artist’, have ‘ “negated” and hindered’ him (86). It is only when Ololon becomes the twelve-year-old virgin that she compensates for previous error, and ‘will surrender herself [...] to the worthy task of complementing and supporting the creative labors [sic] of a divinely gifted and inspired artist, William Blake, infused with the spirit of Milton’ (90). Freed’s conclusion to the section on *Milton* is that, at the poem’s end, ‘Ololon thus becomes the “full partner” of her “inspired man”’ (106). According to this reading, women and men achieve greatness when both sexes surrender and unite. However, for Freed, it is first the female who must compromise and relent to the male, just as she believes Catherine Blake did for her husband when they worked together to create the plates (102).<sup>32</sup>

In the case of *Milton*, Ololon, Enitharmon and Leutha act on their immediate feelings and passions, and by so doing, effect positive change for others. This ability to be emotional enables them to be empathetic and to become saviours, highlighting the moral power of emotion, especially as it is embodied within the female. Leutha is the first figure to choose to offer her own ‘annihilation’ in order to protect Satan from punishment. This is presented as an instinctive response after the Eternal ‘confirm’d’ the philosophy of sacrifice ‘with a thunderous oath’ (76) and she denounces herself to ascertain Satan’s rescue: ‘But Leutha (a Daughter of Beulah) beheld Satan’s condemnation, / She down descended into the midst of the Great Solemn Assembly, / Offering herself a Ransom for Satan, taking on her his Sin’ (76). This direct re-appropriation of the Christian rhetoric of Jesus’ sacrifice (‘For even the Son of man came [...] to give his life a ransom for many’) (Mark 10:45), transposes the Christian message of selfless love on to the woman in Blake’s text. Leutha’s response reacts to the Eternal’s declaration about sacrifice that ‘The Innocent should be condemn’d for the Guilty’ because ‘If the Guilty should be condemn’d, he must be an Eternal Death’ (76). It is

the view of the Assembly that Satan ‘must be new Created continually, moment by moment’ since he is ‘fall’n from his station & never can be redeem’d’ (76). As a result, Leutha gives an impassioned speech in reply; her emotion appears on her body, where she ‘stood glowing with varying colours immortal, heart-piercing, and lovely’ (76). This act elevates her above the Assembly in beauty, ‘& her moth-like elegance shone over the Assembly’ (76). That her desire to rescue Satan is based on her love and wish to save him is clear: she neither expects nor receives any benefit from her act; rather, like Jesus, Leutha risks condemnation herself for the sake of protecting others, condemning herself explicitly: “‘I am the Author of this Sin [...] I stupified the masculine perceptions / And kept only the feminine awake’” (77). This unification of love and self-sacrifice reflects the positive Christian message in 1 John 4:9-10<sup>33</sup> and reveals the first of Milton’s females Saviours in this poem acting out of emotion, unlike the protagonist. This same instinct to protect and rescue, is also visible in Enitharmon’s ‘kind decision’ to create ‘a New Space to protect Satan from Punishment’ (79). Despite the potential of losing power by uniting with the transgressor, Enitharmon provides a refuge; she also shields Leutha who, on seeing her compassion immediately, ‘fled’ to seek sanctuary (79). That women are expected to possess God’s benevolence is made clear in the speech by the Divine Voice.<sup>34</sup>

Ololon has the selfless emotions expected of one able to reach Hartlean annihilation. She is protective and compassionate, appearing in different forms depending on the needs of others. In this way, unlike Milton, Ololon is emotionally engaged, where her feelings are responsive to others, rather than based on the self. Owing to her ability to empathize, Ololon takes many forms. She is a river when she protects Milton’s wives and daughters, providing the exact space they need for comfort: ‘There is in Eden a sweet River, of milk & liquid pearl, / Nam’d Ololon, on whose mild banks dwelt those who Milton drove / Down into Ulro’



(91). Later, she appears as a twelve-year old virgin, where she speaks to the poet and to Milton, humbling herself in this form that presents no threat, and so facilitating the mission of saving. At the end of the poem, she appears as a Moony Ark to protect Jesus: ‘Then as a Moony Ark, Ololon descended [...] One Man, Jesus the Saviour, wonderful! Round his limbs / The Clouds of Ololon folded, as a Garment dipped in blood’ (130). This idea of the clouds being ‘folded’ round the Saviour corresponds to the image of the moony ark signifying love and protection. As Foster Damon suggests: ‘the MOON symbolizes Love [...] In order to give form to error, Los creates the material moon, or love in this world’ and ‘It is the function of the female to provide a moony space of refuge and rest for the male’ (*Dictionary* 286). Therefore, he says the combined image of the moon and the ark recalls Noah’s Ark, which is represented by Blake as a ‘crescent moon, because love saves man from the Sea of Time and Space’ (286). However, Ololon had also been a furious and fiery circle. As a result of this, she is called a ‘wonder of Eternity’ because she can ‘pity & forgive’ despite having been ‘fury & fire’ (117). This depiction of Ololon reveals the poem’s celebration of the feminine, since her ability to pity and act compassionately to others (rather than be wrathful) is what finally enables her to be a Saviour. It is specifically because she is in a ‘Female Form’ that Ololon ‘step’d into the Polypus [...] without becoming / The enemies of Humanity’ (121). Before this, going through the Polypus was an act that only the ‘Divine Saviour’ was said to be able to achieve ‘without annihilation’ (119) which stresses their connection.

Ololon is presented as a Jesus figure during the poem. In altering her form, like Jesus, she relinquishes any notion of a constant, coherent identity. She is also, like him, particularly mysterious. Jesus is seen as both God, human, God made flesh, and alive after death by Christians. His exact nature is impossible to discern. Like Jesus, Ololon is very difficult to define. The selflessness she shows in choosing to leave her dwelling to follow the vulnerable

Milton is her most important act, and the one which most connects her to Jesus. I suggest the portrayal of a female figure as most similar to the Christian Saviour is significant, especially since the reader is expecting the role to be performed by Milton. The poet establishes that women are not only capable of being Christ-like, but that the traditionally feminine qualities, so often regarded as weaknesses, are those that most enable them to assume this prestigious role and achieve self-annihilation. When Ololon realizes that Milton is going to Eternal Death and hears the groans of the Divine Family ‘they groan’d / in spirit and were troubled’ (92), she too decides to sacrifice herself and go to Milton’s aid, despite the fact his journey is not her fault: ‘And Ololon said, “Let us descend also, and let us give / Ourselves to death in Ulro among the Transgressors”’ (92). Ololon is informed by the Divine Family that she cannot save Milton: ‘And now you know this World of Sorrow and feel Pity [...] But you cannot renew Milton. He goes to Eternal Death’ (93); however, she maintains her decision to act regardless. Unlike Milton, Ololon does so without the desire for the personal gains of self-annihilation, spiritual wisdom, or for praise. Rather, like Leutha and Enitharmon before her, her motivation is instinctual and based on compassion, not self-promotion. Further emphasising her likeness to Jesus in his lifetime, Ololon is an unnoticed figure throughout the poem, until her act of self-sacrifice. She possesses humility about her quest, like Jesus, remaining unrecognized in her mission of saving. Even when the mighty angel meets with Ololon in the garden (121), the poet points out that to mortals, the angel appears only as a lark. However, it is a direct result of Ololon’s Christ-like act, where she takes sin upon herself and begs forgiveness, that a road to Eternity is opened: ‘O how the Starry Eight rejoic’d to see Ololon descended, / And now that a wide road was opened to Eternity / By Ololon’s descent thro’ Beulah to Los & Enitharmon’ (120). This moment is even protected from Satan: ‘There is a Moment in each Day that Satan cannot find [...] In this Moment

Ololon descended' (120). Relating back to the beginning of the poem, and resonating with Christian rhetoric, we can see Ololon must be the innocent taking blame for another's guilt, thus challenging an older, more brutal system of justice.

It is significant therefore that Jesus chooses to unite with Ololon in direct response to her decision to rescue: 'even Jesus, / Uniting in One with Ololon' (93), 'Jesus the Saviour, appear'd coming in the Clouds of Ololon' (93). Jesus then stays with her, leading Ololon to be respected by those she encounters much later: 'and all silent forbore to contend / With Ololon, for they saw the Lord in the Clouds of Ololon' (120). We see Jesus abiding with Ololon in a physical and spiritual manner, fulfilling the promises of the Bible where he says, 'I am with you always' (Matthew 28.20), and Paul states 'Jesus Christ is in you' (2 Corinthians 13:5). The Ololon-Jesus connection relates to their mutual suffering, but also shows Ololon being recognized by the divine, even if subordinated by men. It is in contrast to Milton, that Ololon allows attention to be shared with Jesus, rather than taking prestige herself. Emphasising Ololon's status, the final plate ends, not with a depiction of Milton, but of Ololon whose posture is particularly Christ-like, representing at once the ascension and crucifixion (see appendix). Her arms are stretched up above her, and she is naked, but looking towards the skies in apparent calm and freedom. The heading reads: 'To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of all the Nations' (45) which implicates her in the final Judgement with Jesus. Ololon's ability to become protector of Jesus and offer him a refuge and space, invites a reading that sees women's potential to emulate Christ and maintain those feminine qualities that he encapsulates (but which are less highly regarded by men). Ololon reflects Blake's inclusive comment about Christ to Crabb Robinson: 'He is the only God [...] And so am I and so are you –' (Blake qtd Bentley, 412). Each person is divine, but Blake awards the particular Christ-like divinity in the strength of the feminine qualities; both men and women

are capable of possessing these, but an older version of manhood is more resistant to embrace them if he is trapped in a selfish, status-driven way of conceiving the world. Woman has the power to shift this way of thinking if she lives up to her potential, since she will be recognized in her divinity by Christ, and those who see him in her.

## **Conclusion**

Like Wollstonecraft, Blake is sympathetic to the Hartlean synthesis of Christian imagery and concepts, the importance of emotion, and references to the latest scientific philosophy of the body and mind. In particular Hartley's concepts surrounding self-annihilation promotes Blake's feminism where the most heroic emotions are those that involve sacrifice, sympathy and benevolence. By viewing emotions in terms of their heroic potential, Blake reconfigures gender outside of a patriarchal ideology that assumes the superiority of the masculine. Instead he shows how traditionally feminine qualities are more able to achieve greatness. Christianity is made relevant to this discussion where Christ's behaviour and relational way of living is presented as powerful and strong, but also deeply feminized. As a result, Blake's work is controversial for the way the feminine and the female is awarded status. It is my argument that such a view of gender is authoritative and made valuable, particularly through the Hartlean concepts that are used to explore it. Blake uses Christian imagery and vocabulary borrowed from scientific writers. As in Hartley's work, so in Blake's, the person can appropriate emotions and traits, choosing the character he or she wants to be. In *Milton*, 'female' traits can be performed by men as well as women, and the poet refuses a hierarchy of gender. It is the qualities themselves that Blake hopes to make heroic, rather than the sexed bodies that perform them.

## Conclusion

[T]he human mind, as may be seen by all the inquiries into it, and particularly by the history of association, is a thing of a determinate nature; a man's thoughts, words, and actions, are all generated by something previous. (Hartley, *Observations* II:146)

This thesis placed William Blake and Mary Wollstonecraft within their intellectual landscape to illuminate the innovative nature of their feminism and the relevance of David Hartley. My depiction of the 1790s drew attention to three subjects that were undergoing discussion during the Romantic period: non-conformist Protestantism, feminism and emotion. The issues and debates surrounding these subjects impacted on each other, yet they are not usually looked at together. I suggested that by considering these subjects at once, we could appreciate a specific 'Hartlean culture'. This culture had sympathy with Hartley's alternative notions of Christianity and his mechanistic approach to body and mind, thus generating the various republications of *Observations on Man*.<sup>1</sup> More than this, I highlighted that Blake and Wollstonecraft in particular were unique in taking Hartley's multifaceted approach to their own work. Although writing fifty years later, these writers were able to see religious faith and the changing ideas about body and mind as having mutual importance and relevance to each other.

In presenting this argument, one of my main aims was to re-establish David Hartley within Romantic Studies, and chapter one outlined the history and popularity of *Observations* by looking at its various republications and editions until 1834. I drew attention to how

Joseph Priestley's scientific interpretation of the text initially dominated understanding of Hartley until renewed interest in the complete version focused attention on its equally Christian and emotional content. Chapter two continued this discussion by redressing the ongoing neglect and misunderstanding surrounding *Observations*. I argued that Coleridge's rejection of Hartlean ideas in 1801 contributed to later misrepresentation of the text, and I reinstated a more valid interpretation of the work by looking at both volumes. As well as revealing Hartley's fascination with emotion and the body, this also illuminated how *Observations* could have been understood by a 1790s readership that was aware of the second (and third) volume.

Using key Hartlean concepts to read the work of the canonical writers Blake and Wollstonecraft also provided original interpretations of their ideas. Existing scholarship has traditionally focused on readings that do not take into account Blake and Wollstonecraft's religious faith. Previous work can also focus a great deal on the autobiographical nature of their writing, which can ignore its imaginative characterization. My attention to these writers' engagement with Hartlean concepts, such as the theory of association, doctrine of vibrations, self-annihilation, mechanism, faith and spiritual perfection, demonstrated how both were drawing on familiar ideas from their culture in making calls for reform. This drew attention to both the writers' faith and intellectual interests. I also suggested that in this way, Blake and Wollstonecraft's way of writing was particularly sympathetic to Hartley's approach, rather than Priestley's; what emerged most strongly was the similar ways in which the later writers emulated the philosopher's synthesis of faith and theories of body and mind, and used this to be radical. In particular, both Wollstonecraft and Blake made arguments for women's ability to be heroic, powerful, and selfless. Blake and Wollstonecraft upheld the value of female or female-identified emotions, although like Hartley, they also revealed the

power of experiences and choice in shaping the individual. While for Blake this meant that men should equally aspire to the feminine virtues, for Wollstonecraft such an elevation of women's emotion was more exclusive, offering women opportunity for special connection and mutual understanding. Both writers used a 'saviour narrative', working within a strongly Christian framework, where their characters gained status and could reach perfection by imitating Christ's humble and selfless benevolence, also as Hartley suggests.

Such an innovative framework has inspired future directions for research. Applying a similar theoretical model, it would be productive to look at other Romantic writers and members of the Johnson Circle with regard to Hartlean culture and the philosopher's ideas. This could further construct a different understanding of the period as immersed in Hartlean debate. For example, the influence of Hartley on Anna Barbauld's *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781) has already been noticed, but more research is necessary to illuminate her other writings, particularly in light of her interest in emotion, Christianity, and animals.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, recent research on Mary Hays has identified her interest in Hartley, especially the concepts of necessity and materialism that she uses to promote her feminism in *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (Nowka 522-524).<sup>3</sup> It would be useful to engage with her other writings and letters, and to examine the relevance of her religious faith to her interest in the philosopher. Coleridge's intense engagement with Hartley could also be interrogated more closely, especially in terms of his impact on William Wordsworth and William Hazlitt.<sup>4</sup> Shelley read *Observations* in 1811 and considering that his Atheism is based on his understanding of the passive mind and senses, this could be analysed in terms of Hartley's influence.<sup>5</sup> Future research into writers such as Amelia Opie, Joanna Baillie and Mary Robinson, all of whom are preoccupied with emotion and the body, might assess their relationship to Hartley's approach and his theory.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, Hartley might surface as

important an influence as other once reclaimed founders of Romanticism, such as David Hume or Adam Smith.

It was not the aim of this thesis to provide a traditional reception history of *Observations on Man*. Although such work would highlight its impact and popularity more widely, I was interested in how a new awareness of the 1790s culture as ‘Hartlean’ could alter our impression of two radical writers, Blake and Wollstonecraft. My research was confined to these writers’ feminism, and in restricting my analysis, I hope to have shown the radical potential of Hartley, and to have encouraged more research to be conducted on the exceptional impact of his ideas.



## Notes to Introduction

<sup>1</sup> As will be discussed at the end of this Introduction (amongst other key terms), ‘emotion’ in this thesis refers broadly to the various feelings of pleasure and pain that are felt in the body and mind when we experience the world. These pleasures and pains are described by Hartley at length under seven classes, being grouped according to their ability to advance people’s virtue.

<sup>2</sup> This project is interested in dissent from Anglicanism, especially Unitarianism. As will be stated, it does not consider religions outside of Christianity, or Catholicism.

<sup>3</sup> All references to *Observations on Man* in this thesis use the Woodstock Books edition (1998), which is a copy of the two-volume 1749 text. References to volume one will be identified with ‘I’, and volume two ‘II’, before the page number.

<sup>4</sup> In *Romantic Interactions: Social Being and the Turns of Literary Action*, Susan Wolfson is interested in examining the way writers connect with other authors ‘whether on the bookshelf, or in the embodied company of someone else’s writing, or in relation to literary celebrity’ (2). She writes of the ‘web of reciprocally transforming and transformative creative subjects’ in what she calls ‘interaction’ (2). The success of this recent project demonstrates the relevance of such an approach to literature.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Priestley, S.T Coleridge, Benjamin Rush and Harriet Martineau are notable supporters of *Observations on Man*, but Hartley’s work also stimulated the intellectual curiosity of those who did not agree with the ideas. This is also reason for the level of debate created.

<sup>6</sup> As Emma Mason says, women were considered the country’s ‘moral and religious guardians’ (*Women Poets of the Nineteenth Century* 22). In *Mothers of the Nation* Anne Mellor examines how women used their growing religious authority to enter into political debate.

<sup>7</sup> Interesting to note is the popular print ‘The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain’ (1777) and Richard Samuel’s painting *The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain* (1778) (which was triumphantly displayed at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1779). Addison’s contributions to *The Spectator* advocated women’s learning (Eger et al 6), and David Hume asserted that women’s education and conversation were vital for its civilising effect on men (Eger and Peltz 166).

<sup>8</sup> Women’s poetry of this period was particularly associated with examining questions of morality (Backscheider 7) and even ‘secular’ writing by women was often informed by questions of religious sentiment and belief (Backscheider 125). Influential bluestocking Elizabeth Carter’s assertion that poetic gifts are ‘for nobler Purposes assign’d, / To raise the Thoughts, and moralize the Mind’ (Carter qtd Backscheider 8) relates directly to the atmosphere in Britain where women were upheld and celebrated for facilitating an increase in wisdom, intellect and virtue. Poetry was considered an accepted forum for women to intervene into national life and debates (Backscheider 8) and it was able to attain great esteem because of the general reverence towards poetry as ‘one of the holiest of genres’ (Mason, *Women Poets* 2). Even before Wordsworth’s well-known description of poetry as ‘the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’, Robert Lowth had argued for its superior powers owing to its ability to take emotional command: ‘Every species of poetry has in fact its peculiar mode of acting on the human feelings’. Lowth believed in the profound impact of poetry on the soul, mind and society and quoted Francis Bacon at length to substantiate his opinions, clearly sympathising with Bacon’s prioritising of poetry above other literary genres (Lowth 9).

<sup>9</sup> The term ‘Bluestocking’ had initially applied to all Elizabeth Montagu’s visitors, both male and female, and had been coined owing to Benjamin Stillingfleet (Eger and Peltz 29-31).

<sup>10</sup> Also included in this group are: Benjamin Franklin, Richard Price, Humphrey Davy, Antoine Laurent Lavoisier, Jonathan Edwards, John Newton, William Godwin, Thomas Malthus and Erasmus Darwin; Alexander Geddes, Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, and Thomas Christie (the editor of Johnson’s *Analytical Review*), also Thomas Holcroft. Barbara Taylor lists Joel Barlow, Mary Hays, Richard and Maria Edgeworth, Thomas Beddoes and Anna Barbauld for their close contact with Johnson and association with the group.

Johnson's contacts as publisher and correspondent with intellectuals outside the capital, included John Aikin, Erasmus Darwin and William Enfield.

<sup>11</sup> It was this that created an 'extensive network of nonconformist writers, educators, reviewers and publishers' who 'attempted to define and publicize their marks of separation' (White 11).

<sup>12</sup> Knott and Taylor explain: 'Week after week, these women and men would meet, often in the home of Wollstonecraft's published Joseph Johnson, to hammer out their new-world philosophy. The etiquette for these occasions was strictly egalitarian: as all present were deemed to possess reason, so all were entitled to the free expression of reason opinion, whatever their sex, education or social position. Women's rights to converse on the same terms as men was assumed, and – if the lively exchanges recorded in William Godwin's diary and correspondence are any indication – vigorously exploited' (xix).

<sup>13</sup> Founded by Johnson in 1788 (and run by him with Thomas Christie until 1799) this publication provided a voice for reform and opposed the government's policy of war with revolutionary France throughout the 1790s. All of Johnson's interests, and those of many of the writers in his circle, appeared, disseminating ideas and representing social and political bonds in printed form (Mee, *Companion to Romantic Age*)

<sup>14</sup> See: Mee, Jon. 'Johnson, Joseph.' *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*: Oxford University Press, 2002. Oxford Reference. 2005.

<sup>15</sup> He even published conservative work that advocated the continuation of the slave trade, despite his humanitarian views, as well as medical tracts that both supported and opposed the same ideas such as inoculation (Chard 140).

<sup>16</sup> Johnson also published the most famous work 'of all the major English authors still published by the share system at the turn of the century, Johnson was the majority or the exclusive shareholder of virtually every one. The more significant included the latest editions of Shakespeare (the Malone and the Steevens), the works of Milton, Pope, Addison, Steele, Dr. Johnson (including the *Lives*), and all the novelists (with the exception of Richardson, interestingly)' (Chard 149). As Chard concludes: 'Virtually every giant of the second half of the eighteenth century in medicine, science, religion, philosophy, political thought, education, and poetry published at least one work with Johnson' (Chard 149).

<sup>17</sup> Books with a theological leaning may reflect his interest in Unitarianism. It is interesting to remember that he was involved in setting up the first Unitarian chapel in 1774.

<sup>18</sup> The radical nature and potential power that the Johnson circle represented meant that the government took the threat of Johnson seriously. Johnson was a subversive figure who stood up for the principle of a free press when it had few defenders, and was a member of the Society for Constitutional Information; he supported Joseph Priestley during the Church and King riots in Birmingham (which destroyed his laboratory) through publishing a series of provocative pamphlets; he gave court testimonies on behalf of authors and booksellers who had fallen victim of the witch-hunts of the 1790s (Chard 139), and he was subsequently questioned during the Treason Trials of 1794. Having been arrested in 1798 (for selling a pamphlet by Gilbert Wakefield), he was finally sentenced to six months in the King's Bench prison in 1799. It was the infamous Tom Paine, who gave him lodgings when the authorities were seeking him. Apparent here are the deep-rooted loyalties and the ethos of radicalism that were cemented through political and intellectual sympathies. These created bonds of friendship and understanding, exemplified by Johnson's example.

<sup>19</sup> Caroline Franklin feels it is 'certain' that they did (40), while G.R Bentley says they probably did not (111).

<sup>20</sup> Peter Ackroyd points out that 'In fact the evidence suggests that Blake only ever attended one of these dinners, and his presumed friendship with these Unitarian dissenters and radicals is a matter of pure speculation' (86).

<sup>21</sup> For him, their close friendship with Fuseli, and the famous author's love of him, would have inevitably made Blake 'among the closest of offstage observers' (70).

<sup>22</sup> I will discuss this more in chapter four. The connection between Wollstonecraft and 'Mary' is referenced by Robert N. Essick. He believes the first scholar to make the association was S. Foster Damon in *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols*. In terms of Oothoon, Nelson Hilton notes that 'This possibility [of Visions being associated with the love affair between Wollstonecraft and Fuseli] is noted by Alicia Ostriker' (N. Hilton 69).

<sup>23</sup> Richmond informed Palmer that Blake 'died on Sunday Night at 6 O'clock in a most glorious manner. He said He was going to that Country he had all His life wished to see & expressed Himself Happy hoping for Salvation through Jesus Christ-Just before he died His Countenance became fair-His eyes brighten'd and He burst out in Singing of the things he Saw in Heaven' (Bentley 346-47).

<sup>24</sup> Robert Ryan comments about Blake that 'In much of the criticism one detects an underlying sentiment that to admit Blake's orthodoxy would be to deny or diminish his radicalism or his modernity' (45); the same can be said of attitudes towards Wollstonecraft's work, and Barbara Taylor points out that the writer's religious faith is too often seen as disconnected to her feminism.

<sup>25</sup> Blake and Wollstonecraft's particular rewritings of Christian tropes are important for accessing the religious, radical culture they inhabited.

<sup>26</sup> Taylor writes that 'The religious basis for Wollstonecraft's radicalism is its least-explored aspect, yet it is impossible to understand her political hopes, including her hopes for women, outside of a theistic framework' (4). In terms of Blake, while acknowledging that 'the Blakean artist-prophet is engaged in a perennial struggle with the enslaving tyranny of institutionalised forms of knowledge', Jonathan Roberts rightly states: '[T]o overlook his theology on account of its heretical form (for instance, by placing him outside the remit of theology, by classifying him as an 'artist') is to miss out on the thinker whom Ulrich Simon, in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, matter-of-factly describes as 'probably the most original interpreter of the Bible'' (*Blake's Poetry* 8).

<sup>27</sup> Emma Mason and Mark Knight also comment that 'While Blake's religious position is extreme, it is an essentially Christian one, based as it is on centralizing the figure of Christ at the heart of what it means to be a human being' (43).

<sup>28</sup> Ankarsjö says we have underestimated the influence of Unitarian thought on Blake considering that he was part of the Johnson coterie (15-16) and that we should not be too quick to assume his dislike of the Priestlean/Unitarianism focus on reason as such, since he does not oppose it in his poetry but rather advocates balance (18). He adds that both Blake and Unitarianism are progressive in their nature, and Blake and Priestley share a utopian mindset (19).

<sup>29</sup> Groups affiliated to antinomians ranged from Quakerism to Swedenborgianism, both of which Blake was involved with (Priestman 8-9). This is a figure whom 'The Moravian love feast exemplified their basic belief in the affective power of the Gospel over that of dogma or doctrine' (Schuchard 42) and similarly, Swedenborgianism allowed that 'there is an internal message in the scriptures that can be accessed through privileging its emotional content' (Schuchard 43).

<sup>30</sup> Schuchard argues that Blake's mother would have 'implemented many of Zinzendorf's teachings about art, music and spirituality in the education of her young child' (127). She knew of Zinzendorf's belief that children were capable of spiritual and visionary exercises (128).

<sup>31</sup> Schuchard argues that the Armitages and Blakes (both Blake's relatives) acquired a unique spiritual education as part of the Moravians, which gave them 'access to an international network of ecumenical missionaries, an esoteric tradition of Christian Kabbalism, Hermetic alchemy and Oriental mysticism; a European 'high culture' of religious art, music and poetry and a supportive political environment for opposition to current government policies' (14). The scholar goes into detail about the sect and its founder, Count Zinzendorf.

<sup>32</sup> Rowland emphasises that Blake understood and then reconceived the Bible throughout his work. I agree with his assertion that 'He grasped the Bible's underlying patterns and themes and reproduced them in different ways in images, poetry, prose and illuminated books. His purpose was not an aesthetic act, narrowly conceived. For

him the text was a means to an end: to bring about the conversation of minds, hearts and lives to a life of 'forgiveness of sins' and the abjuration of 'Religion hid in war, a Dragon red, and hidden Harlot' (1).

<sup>33</sup> Barbara Taylor's excellent study of Wollstonecraft, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination*, gives a very thorough account on Mary Wollstonecraft's Christian faith. See also Taylor's chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*.

<sup>34</sup> Franklin suggests her inclination for dissent as the reasons for her decision to base her schools in Islington and then Newington Green, a village with a reputation as 'a nonconformist educational centre and a home to progressive thinkers' (Franklin 13). While she never fully embraced Unitarianism, it was the educational thought of Rational Dissent that first attracted her, followed by its radical politics (Franklin 15).

<sup>35</sup> However, Price was also Arian, believing that Jesus was more than human, though not to be prayed to as God. He was a rationalist but a Platonist who argued against the empiricist enlightenment philosophers like Francis Hutcheson and David Hume (Franklin 15).

<sup>36</sup> The 'Dissenting public sphere' consisted of 'austere and "enlightened" civic values', such as liberty, free and rational enquiry, virtue, self-discipline, and a middle-class mercantile ethos (White 11). This was a time when the established church was presented by moderate dissenters as being at odds with the spirit of the nation and even secular radicals like John Thewall saw that the liberty, equality and enquiry they sought for in parliament, could be recognised within the Presbyterian Church (White 19).

<sup>37</sup> White explains that 'The religious dispositions, political aspirations, economic interests, and literary tastes of Dissenting communities impelled the genesis of Romanticism in England [...] the nonconformist identities, beliefs, and debates energized and molded much of the cultural achievement that we now associate with the early Romantic movement' (1). In this way the mid-to-late eighteenth century was 'the period during which the redefinition of Christianity dominated political and social life' (White 3)

<sup>38</sup> We should remember that in 1794 Priestley was mourning that 'rational Dissenters [...] are dwindling away almost everywhere,' (Priestley qtd White 87). A symbolic example of the tensions are seen when Priestley watched as his home was burnt and his library destroyed by a 'Church and King' mob in 1791. He had written despondently in 1793: 'I cannot give you an idea of the violence which every friend of liberty is persecuted in this country'. At the same time republican terrorism in France and the outbreak of war were diminishing British radical confidence. White says that 'Liberty's face that had shone so brightly in 1789-92 was once again obscured by oppression and xenophobia, leaving many radical philosophers bitterly disillusioned' (148). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the leading figures of dissent such as Priestley, Richard Price, Timothy Hollis, and Robert Robinson, had either died or emigrated, and the leading Dissenting academies had also been forced to close (Hoxton in 1785, Warrington in 1786, Daventry in 1789, and the New College in Hackney in 1796) (White 87). Its once leading politically-based identity seemed to be diminishing, and Unitarianism had to reform itself, as many preferred to express their beliefs less subversively, through broader humanitarian issues such as peace and anti-slavery (Gleadle, *Gender, Power* 144).

<sup>39</sup> As Robert Ryan says, 'religion was perceived [...] to function as an ideology of liberation rather than one of repression' (10).

<sup>40</sup> Both William Blake and Mary Wollstonecraft had close contact with Unitarianism. While the emphasis on reason may have been distasteful to Blake, he could be sympathetic to the Unitarians' progressive and individualist culture, and their radical opposition to all that state religion represented (Ankarsjö 16-19). Ankarsjö numbers Wollstonecraft (alongside Mary Hays, Coleridge, Hazlitt, the Aikins and Barbaulds) as amongst the prominent members of a Unitarian culture, reminding us of its popularity in Stoke Newington, near where Wollstonecraft lived. While Wollstonecraft was in fact loyal to her Anglican roots, and Blake more interested in his own version of Christianity ('I must create a System or be enslaved to another man's'), Ankarsjö's inclusion of the pair into this set draws attention to its vital role in intellectual and literary circles.

<sup>41</sup> Ruth Watts recalls that both Hays and Priestley held similar attitudes towards women (Watts, *Gender Power* 17). Scott Nowka writes that 'As a Rational Dissenter, or Unitarian, Mary Hays was also indebted to her religious background for her introduction to the ideas central to her particular brand of materialist feminism'

(523). He refers to Luria Walker's work who argues that religion was Hays' initial point of contact and enduring connection with Enlightenment (522). As Nowka continues to explain: 'Hays's materialist ideas originated in her acquaintance with the British philosophe and father of Unitarianism, Joseph Priestley, and her reading of David Hartley's *Observations on Man*' (524).

<sup>42</sup> Watts identifies the appeal of Hartley's theory by summarising what she sees as the most alluring aspects for Priestley: 'This postulated that all humanity's mental, emotional and moral life was based on the association of ideas. Careful intellectual, physical and moral education was seen to be the vital and interdependent means for promoting the love of God and the development of the truly good man or woman. Environment and circumstance were given tremendous importance and these, unlike innate cause or divine effect, could be changed and adjusted by human beings' (*Revolution and Reaction* 312).

<sup>43</sup> Hartley's own work is also human-centred, and in terms of Jesus, focus rests on the achievement of his perfection, rather than depicting him as God; such perfection is a state which readers are also encouraged to strive towards. Hartley writes: 'our Saviour's entire devotion to God, and sufferings for the sake of men in compliance with his will, is a pitch of perfection, which was never proposed, or thought of, before his coming' (*Observations* II.170). He continues to discuss his role as Saviour but sees this as somehow to do with his perfection and the model he represented: 'At least, one may affirm, that the condescension of Christ, in leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and in shewing himself a perfect pattern of obedience to the will of God, both in doing and suffering, has a most peculiar tendency to rectify the present moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure and spiritual happiness' (167-168). Hartley sees Jesus as a figure who can fit with his own spiritual philosophy that mankind can be reformed through education: 'Christ, and his Apostles [...] attempt was that of reforming all mankind, and making them happy in a future state' (II.177).

<sup>44</sup> One of the most well-known prophets was 'Prince of the Hebrews' Richard Brothers, who generated more than eighty publications relating to his apocalyptic prophecies. Even Blake is thought to have been influenced by Brothers, particularly his predictions regarding the French victories and of Babylonian London's imminent downfall; equally important was Brothers' promise to gather both visible and invisible English Jews, who he would restore to the New Jerusalem (McCalman 322).

<sup>45</sup> In terms of the popular ideas surrounding the Jewish restoration, commemorative tokens were made by Thomas Spence of Lord George Gordon. This convert was depicted wearing Jewish garb and leading the riots in 1780 (McCalman 319).

<sup>46</sup> Plebeian seeker, William Hamilton Reid, 'ascribed to him the growing expectation amongst alehouse Jacobins than an apocalyptic explosion would purge Christendom of slavery and superstition around the middle of the 1790s. A ragged old clothes seller of Duke Street had even fancied that he was personally chosen to deliver the Jews' (McCalman 319). We should remember that Priestley's restorationist ideas regarding the Jews were indebted to Hartley in particular, (McCalman 315), who similarly speculated about these issues in *Observations*. Even in 1798, in Pennsylvania, Priestley read news of Napoleon's success alongside the book of Daniel and wrote to friends of his conviction that the work of restoring the Jews was 'in agitation' (331). He believed the French Revolution was the fulfilment of biblical prophecy, and emphasized that he had reached his conclusions by reason and research (and not by the direct illumination of the spirit) (Mee, *Split Religion* para 15). While Priestley was not free from accusations of enthusiasm (Mee, *Enthusiasm* 24), his rational approach to millenarianism appealed to marginal artists and writers outside the formal knowledge or patronage system (Mee, *Enthusiasm* 317).

<sup>47</sup> He asked: 'But may not women, as well as men, bear a part in this honourable service?' He answered: 'Undoubtedly they may; nay, they ought; it is meet, right, and their bounden duty.' Wesley found 'no difference' between male and female believers: 'there is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus [...] You, as well as men, are rational creatures. You, like them, were made in the image of God; you are equally candidates for immortality; you too are called of God, as you have time, to "do good unto all men." Be "not disobedient to the heavenly calling' (Wesley in Dale Johnson 71).

<sup>48</sup> In Taylor's view 'the affirmation of women's capacity to apprehend and identify with the divine, expressed in nearly all female writings of the period, was so fundamental to women's sense of ethical worth, and so far-

reaching in its egalitarian implications, that it can properly be described as one of the founding impulses of feminism' (*Feminist Imagination* 102).

<sup>49</sup> In the 1790s, philanthropy gave women a less subversive way to express their radicalism and politics after the French Revolution; although the rise in female philanthropy is often associated with the Evangelical movement, it is Gleadle's argument that, for dissenting women, this was less a motivating factor than Unitarianism (144). Nearly all eighteenth and nineteenth century feminists were active Christians (99).

<sup>50</sup> Bluestocking women formed intellectual networks and contributed successfully to literary and intellectual culture (Eger and Peltz 47)

<sup>51</sup> Before this time both men and women made up the Bluestocking circle for rational 'Enlightenment' forms of sociability (Eger and Peltz 17).

<sup>52</sup> This named each of the women it depicted; even more popular than the painting, this became the 'main attraction' in the *Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum-Book for 1778* and encouraged women to aspire to this group's prestigious positions (Eger and Peltz 62-64).

<sup>53</sup> Before the French Revolution, literary and intellectual women were 'more present and more powerful, than at any other points in history' (Eger and Peltz 127).

<sup>54</sup> In particular, Polwhele criticises Mary Wortley Montague, Elizabeth Carter, Anna Seward, Hester Thrale Piozzi, Fanny Burney, and Anna Radcliffe.

<sup>55</sup> Even Elizabeth Montagu and Mary Hays felt that Catherine Macaulay's public downfall was due to her violation of gender boundaries. Montagu stated: 'I hate a woman's mind in men's cloaths [...] I always look'd upon Mrs Macaulay as one of the lads [...] than as one of the gentle sex' (Montagu qtd Eger and Peltz 104). Hays agreed that Macaulay had 'stepped out of the province of her sex' (105); at the end of the eighteenth century, both female readers and writers were perceived as threatening (Eger and Peltz 134). Macaulay's entrance into politics during the 1760s and early 1770s enabled her to appropriate a more masculine role of historian and political commentator (99), yet her unusual lifestyle with Reverend Thomas Wilson (who was almost thirty years younger, and whom she eventually married) was used to ridicule her seeming vanity and morality, leading her to be described as a 'monster' by a previous supporter John Wilkes. Most offensive was her apparent disregard to protect her public display of virtue and respectability (104).

<sup>56</sup> The print of *The Nine Living Muses* was 'the main attraction' of Joseph Johnson's production *Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum-Book for 1778*. In this book, women were encouraged to identify with the women (63). However, after 1815, writers that were critical of intellectual women included S.T Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron and William Hazlitt (Eger and Peltz 130).

<sup>57</sup> When considering radical culture in Britain, focus on the 1790s has often been dominated by discussion of the French Revolution. Marilyn Butler's excellent work on this decade refers to the 'public issue, the 'Revolution debate'' (1), considered to last from the celebrations for France's liberty in 1789, to Pitt's government's attempts to censor the spread of radicalism in December 1795 (*Controversy* 1). Secular radical groups including the Society for Constitutional Information, revived by John Horne Tooke in 1790, and the London Corresponding Society, founded in 1792, are often regarded as the most important testaments to the anxiety for reform and founded on revolutionary ideas. Butler calls the latter society 'the single most important organisation in the radical campaign' (*Controversy* 7). Similarly, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791) and Godwin's *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) are considered by her to be part of the 'collective literary enterprise [...] so clearly focused upon a single complex issue', the revolution (*Controversy* 2). For Butler, the main questions being asked in 1792 were: 'should Britain continue to be governed by owners of the land? Why do so few own the land? Even, why need individuals own land at all?' (2). The Dissenters' continued attempts to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts (defeated in 1787, 1789, 1790, and 1791) are similarly related to the revolution, seen to represent the public nature of the political climate from the 1770s (4).

<sup>58</sup> Claudia Johnson argues that: ‘Whereas Burke had accounted for the political crisis in France at least in part by postulating the ascendancy of monstrously cold-hearted men, Wollstonecraft maintains conversely that society is being undermined by feminized, sentimental men. In so doing, she invokes an older standard of rational manhood – his “pampered sensibility,” his hysterical sensitivity, his pretty and artificial flights. Standing for the moment outside sentimental discourse, Wollstonecraft represents the Burkean man of feeling as the mere female of the pre-sentimental tradition of the classical and Judeo-Christian culture, a female whose deficiencies of reason and self-control justify masculine domination: even at his best (“honest”) sentimental man is “confused” and incapable of responsible self-command (a “slave” to his habits), and so susceptible to flights of passion that he is inadequate to the dignity of full citizenship and thus needs to be governed by strong authority for his own good. Wollstonecraft saw little hope for social change so long as men like Burke unsexed themselves by holding to the sentimental premise that “humanity to women is the characteristic of advancing civilization”’ (Johnson 134). She also claims: ‘To her mind, such “humanity” – at least as Burke construes it in the *Reflections* and in his letter to Francis – reduced men themselves to the status of women, women to the status of children’ (7-8). I will discuss this in chapter three.

<sup>59</sup> She has asked: ‘Pray, sir, give me leave to ask you [...] what, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word *sentimental*, so much in vogue amongst the polite, both in town and country? In letters and common conversation, I have asked several who make use of it, and have generally received for answer, it is – it is – *sentimental*. Every thing clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word; but [...] it is impossible every thing clever and agreeable can be so common as this word’ (Doody 11)

<sup>60</sup> Barbauld states her dislike of what she calls ‘outward pomp and mechanical worship’ and calls for a purer religion involving the ‘finer affections of the heart’ (Barbauld 219). For her, devotion is ‘a taste, an affair of sentiment and feeling’, to do with ‘more exalted feelings’ (212), ‘honest emotion’ (219) and completely separate from ‘enthusiastic faith’ (212). As she considers young people to be naturally ‘ingenuous’ with a ‘generous expansion of heart’ and ‘open tempers’ she rebukes society’s tendency to treat genuine emotion with disdain (219).

<sup>61</sup> For *The Cave of Fancy*, I use *Posthumous Works of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798); for *Mary*, *A Fiction*, see *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman*. Ed. James Kinsley and Gary Kelley. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980. For *Original Stories* I use *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*. Vol 4. Eds. Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler. My references to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* refers to the version edited by Miriam Brody. London: Penguin, 2004. *Maria* refers to: *Mary and The Wrongs of Woman*. Ed. James Kinsley and Gary Kelly. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

<sup>62</sup> I refer to *Milton: A Poem*. Ed. Kay Parkhurst Easson and Roger R. Easson. London: Thames and Hudson, 1979.

## Notes to Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> The philosophical differences between Priestley and Hartley were noticed by Caulfield in *An Essay on the Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul and Its Instinctive Sense of Good and Evil* (1778). This writer wanted to ensure that Hartley’s reputation was not tarnished by Priestley’s controversial ideas. The sense in which Hartley was seen as a catalyst for radical materialist debate is clear from the way in which his son aimed to influence new readers’ opinions. In 1791 he writes about his father: ‘There was but one point in which he appeared anxious to prevent any misapprehensions of his principles: that point respected the immateriality of the soul. He was apprehensive lest the doctrine of corporeal vibrations, being instrumental to sensation, should be deemed unfavourable to the opinion of the immateriality of the soul. He was therefore anxious to declare, and have it understood, that he was not a materialist’ (Hartley Jr, *Sketch* xv).

<sup>2</sup> This copy was produced for James Leake and William Frederick in Bath. It was sold by Charles Hitch and Stephen Austen in London.

<sup>3</sup> This was an ever-popular subject for debate since Descartes' concept of dualism, with followers such as Nicholas Malebranche contributing to discussion. Hartley's text was innovative because, unlike other writing on the subject, it seemed to find a satisfying solution to the mind-body problem.

<sup>4</sup> His first wife Alice Rowley had died giving birth to their son David in 1731. They had married in 1730.

<sup>5</sup> By marrying, they relinquished Elizabeth's inheritance, but enjoyed a happy relationship.

<sup>6</sup> For a useful discussion of Hartley's life, character and work, see Roy Porter's *Flesh in the Age of Reason* (347-360) or for a more detailed commentary, Richard Allen's *David Hartley on Human Nature*.

<sup>7</sup> The 1791 review in *The Analytical Review* explained that 'though it has been before the publick ever since the year 1749, it is only of late years [...] that it has been much attended to' (Q.Q 361).

<sup>8</sup> In the biography, his son wrote that Hartley 'did not expect that it would meet with any general or immediate reception in the philosophical world, or even that it would be much read or understood; neither did it happen otherwise than he had expected. But at the same time he did entertain an expectation that, at some distant period, it would become the adopted system of future philosophers. That period now seems to be approaching' (xiii). Richard Allen suggests that the lack of controversy surrounding the text, and that fact that there was not another edition until the German translation, published in 1772, was that 'the work was simply accepted as another contribution to the Newtonian paradigm – albeit with a distinctively religious slant' (376).

<sup>9</sup> He wrote: 'It has long been the opinion of all the admirers of Dr. Hartley among my acquaintances, as well as my own, that his *Observations on Man* could not have failed to have been more generally read, and his *theory of the human mind* to have prevailed, if it had been made more intelligible; and if the work had not been clogged with a whole system of moral and religious knowledge; which however excellent, is, in a great measure, foreign to it. Both these obstacles it has been my object to remove; by exhibiting his theory of the human mind, as far as it relates to the doctrine of *association of ideas* only' (Hartley, *Theory of Mind* iii).

<sup>10</sup> Priestley also adopted materialism in the 1770s from reading *Observations* (although Hartley had himself denied the doctrine) (Dybikowski 84). As a result of Hartley's importance, Priestley declared that *Observations* 'contains a new and most extensive science' (Hartley qtd Allen 12), and in his 1774 publication, *Examination*, he affirmed his debt to Hartlean thought: 'I can almost say, that I think myself more indebted to this one treatise, than to all the books I ever read beside; the scripture excepted' (Priestley, *Examination* xix).

<sup>11</sup> *Examination* was a text that aimed to challenge what he considered the pseudo-science of Reid, Oswald and Beattie, and simultaneously defended the theory of *Observations*. Priestley presented a hostile account of the Scottish school of philosophy, and he linked himself with Hartley against these three thinkers who subscribed to the view of 'common sense' (that claimed certain beliefs to be based neither on education or habit, but held simply because of our common human nature) (Dybikowski 87). Priestley dedicated time to describing Hartley's intricate physiological approach to knowledge, writing of the elegance of his theory of the nerves and brain. He criticises those who prefer vague ideas about God's essential role in facilitating humans' acquirement of knowledge, especially those of Dr Reid, who 'not satisfied with this [Hartley's] evidence, pretends that certain belief of the real existence of external objects is arbitrarily connected with the ideas of them' (*Examination* lix-lx).

<sup>12</sup> This theory is positioned in opposition to hydrostatics. He says those who still maintain a belief in the five mechanical powers will not be able to understand or accept the theory of vibrations.

<sup>13</sup> Priestley explains that Locke had considered that impressions were caused by external senses on the mind, and Ideas of Reflection were those more complex ideas caused by reflecting on the operations of mind. Priestley emphasises Hartley's innovation in proving that all ideas came from ideas on the senses.

<sup>14</sup> Priestley also highlights that it is finally irrelevant whether the correspondent feelings that accompany virtue and vice are instinctive, because the operations of the mind/brain are the same in any case

<sup>15</sup> By 1810, the full version of *Observations* had run into five editions, being reprinted twice in 1791, twice in 1801, and once in 1810 (as well as being printed in smaller parts in 1793, 1794, 1795, and 1796).



<sup>16</sup> Hoxie N. Fairchild writes that it is testament to the text's popularity that Johnson printed it twice in this year, and only one year after he had brought out a second edition of Priestley's abridgement.

<sup>17</sup> A seventh in 1849 was printed by Leake & Frederick.

<sup>18</sup> With regard to necessity, he writes that 'I was not at all aware, that it followed from that of association, for several years after I had begun my inquiries; nor did I admit it at last without the greatest reluctance' (*Observations* I:iv) and he defends his inclusion of this theory: 'Some persons may perhaps think that I ought not to have delivered my opinions so freely and openly, concerning the necessity of human actions, and the ultimate happiness of mankind', however 'these tenets appear to me not only innocent, but even highly conducive to the promotion of piety and virtue amongst mankind' (I:v).

<sup>19</sup> Sensations are 'Internal feelings of the mind which arise from impressions made by external objects upon the several parts of the body' (I:i). However Ideas or Intellectual Ideas are 'All our other internal feelings' (I:ii).

<sup>20</sup> He continues to explain the complexities, writing that also 'it may happen [...] that *A*, may raise a particular miniature, as *b*, preferably to any of the rest, from its being more associated with *B*, from the novelty of the impression of *B*' (I:73). Furthermore, the author allows that the doctrines of association and vibrations can exist independently of each other (I:72), and he is not prescriptive about his own views.

<sup>21</sup> He explains using an example of how children learn to grasp: 'sensations, ideas, and motions, will put the child upon grasping, till, at last, that idea, or state of mind which we may call the will to grasp, is generated, and sufficiently associated with the action to produce it instantaneously. Is it therefore perfectly voluntary in this case; and, by the innumerable repetitions of it in this perfectly voluntary state, it comes, at last, to obtain a sufficient connection with so many diminutive sensations, ideas, and motions, as to follow them in the same manner as originally automatic actions do the corresponding sensations, and consequently to be automatic secondarily. And, in the same manner, may all the actions performed with the hands be explained, all those that are very familiar in life passing from the original automatic state through the several degrees of voluntariness till they become perfectly voluntary, and then repassing through the same degrees in an inverted order, till they become secondarily automatic on many occasions, though still perfectly voluntary on some' (I:105).

<sup>22</sup> 'And it happens, in most cases, that the decomplex idea belonging to any sentence, is not compounded merely of the complex ideas belonging to the words of it; but that there are also many variations, some oppositions, and numberless additions' (I:79).

<sup>23</sup> Hartley explains the difference between automatic and secondarily automatic actions: 'After the actions, which are most perfectly voluntary, have been rendered so by one set of associations, they may, by another, be made to depend upon the most diminutive sensations, ideas, and motions, such as the mind scarce regards, or is conscious of; and which therefore it can scarce recollect the moment after the action is over. Hence it follows, that association not only converts automatic actions into voluntary, but voluntary into automatic. For these actions, of which the mind is scarce conscious, and which follow mechanically, as it were, some precedent diminutive sensation, idea, or motion, and without any effort of the mind, are rather to be ascribed to the body than the mind, i.e. are to be referred to the head of / automatic motions. I shall call them automatic motions of the secondary kind, to distinguish them both from those which are originally automatic and from the voluntary ones' (I:104-105).

<sup>24</sup> The chapters are entitled: "Of the GENERAL LAWS, according to which the SENSATIONS and MOTIONS are performed, and our IDEAS GENERATED" for chapter one. Chapter Two "Containing the APPLICATION of the DOCTRINE of VIBRATIONS and ASSOCIATION to each of the SENSATIONS and MOTIONS in particular" followed by the third chapter "Containing a particular APPLICATION of the foregoing THEORY to the PHAENOMENA of IDEAS, or of UNDERSTANDING, AFFECTION, MEMORY, and IMAGINATION" and the last, "Of the Six Classes of Intellectual Pleasures and Pains".

<sup>25</sup> He also refuses any accusation that his project supports the concept of rational-self interest in itself.

<sup>26</sup> These qualities are seen as democratic by Hartley since everyone has it in his power to benefit others (I:287), and the need for sympathy is most specific to humans, who unlike the brutes are ‘dependent upon, and necessary to, each other’ (I:287). It is Hartley’s view that we should practise acts of benevolence in order to beget pleasure in them.

<sup>27</sup> The moral sense ‘warns us beforehand, and calls us to account afterwards; it condemns or acquits; it rewards by the pleasure of self-approbation, or punishes by the pains of self-condemnation (II:337) The moral sense is further anthropomorphised: ‘It appears therefore with the austerity of a judge, and also of one who knows the heart; and, by consequence it claims to be God’s viceregent’ (II:337). The moral sense is generated by piety, benevolence, and rational self-interest; all which are the guides of life in deliberate actions (538).

<sup>28</sup> He argues that the existence of a future state is proved by the ‘inequalities in the dispensations of providence’ (II:388).

<sup>29</sup> With reference to the Bible’s claims to punishment, Hartley argues that this should not be taken literally, with even the Saviour often appealing to his listeners to make ‘natural equitable judgements’ (II:430). It is also his opinion that when Christ speaks of punishment, he intimates an end to such punishment (II:431), and the scripture is discussed and interpreted so that it implies the ultimate happiness of mankind. Hartley feels that the concept that there is only an elect group who are able to reach happiness is counter to Christian teaching (II:432).

<sup>30</sup> In relation to free will, he clarifies his understanding of suffering by arguing that if God ‘has given men free-will in such a measure, as that they may bring upon themselves finite misery [...] in the present state, or in any future intermediary one’, they still will not be able to make themselves miserable in eternity (II:423). Free-will is ‘restrained’ to prevent such an occurrence (II:423).

<sup>31</sup> Hoxie Fairchild describes well the impact of these notes: ‘The Pistorius notes concern only Part II of Hartley’s work; hence two-thirds of the total weight of the edition is placed on the ethical and religious rather than on the mechanistically psychological side of the balance. The same emphasis is strong in the editor’s biography of his father, who is described less as a man of science than as ‘a Catholic Christian in the most extensive and liberal sense of that term’ (1014-1015).

<sup>32</sup> Hartley Jr references that his father received his education at Jesus College, Cambridge from the age of fifteen (rather than at a dissenting academy) and was later made a fellow of the society (v). On the following page, he is described specifically as ‘a Catholic Christian in the most extensive and liberal sense of that term’ who ‘did not think it necessary to separate himself from its [the church of England] communion on account of some contested articles of speculative and abstruse opinion’ (vi). While referring to his difficulty to accept Anglican doctrines, the biographer is most adamant in this short essay, to reinforce the philosopher’s Christian belief and traditional views. The fact that his father was unable to adhere to the thirty-nine articles due to ‘some scruples’ (v), for example, meant that Hartley’s decision not to enter the Church was a disappointment and misfortune: he wanted a ‘career of honest fame, in the service of the national church, if he could have complied with their conditions’ (vii); moreover, this was his ‘first choice’ (vii) before the medical profession.

<sup>33</sup> However, on the first point regarding Christianity’s superior worth, Hartley is said to be a ‘partizan for the Christian religion’ who ‘felt some jealousy of the rivalry of human philosophy, and regarded the Essay on Man by Mr. Pope, as tending to insinuate that the divine revelation of the Christian religion was superfluous, in a case where human philosophy was adequate’ (x-xi). In response to this, the biographer argues that Hartley’s view deemed the ‘unsuspecting’ Pope was influenced by Lord Bolingbroke to use ‘the plagiarisms of modern ethics’ that were originally ‘from Christian doctrines’ (xi). The biography asks readers to view Hartley’s own *Observations* in terms of their Christian morality and Christian paraphrase.

<sup>34</sup> On the issue of the soul, which had caused furore for Priestley, the biographer claims: ‘There was but one point in which he [Hartley] appeared anxious to prevent any misapprehension of his principles: that point respected the immateriality of the soul. He was apprehensive lest the doctrine of corporeal vibrations, being instrumental to sensation, should be deemed unfavourable to the opinion of the immateriality of the soul’ (xv).

<sup>35</sup> This was also printed by the 'London Unitarian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue' in the same year, reminding us of Hartley's importance to the Unitarians and their values.

<sup>36</sup> Priestley gives his 'earnest recommendation of the following pages to general notice' (Hartley, *Conclusions 1794 Advertisement*) and, in keeping with his own ideas, summarises them in terms of their revolutionary potential.<sup>36</sup> Hartley is presented as a prophet-figure, who alludes to the looming apocalyptic revolution, and Priestley praises him for his modesty in this regard. Where this is important for our study of Blake and Wollstonecraft, is how Hartley is associated with the radical culture of the 1790s, and thus made relevant to these writers' own values and interests. At the same time, the essence of Hartley's work on cultivating the self is maintained, even if politicized by being made patriotic. Priestley uses the publication of this section of *Observations* as a platform on which to highlight the importance of religion and self-improvement: 'Self-love is an innate principle of human nature: but selfishness, as a national character, Britain disclaims. The people of this country are naturally benevolent and generous. And that apparent selfishness, to which my author alludes is an imported vice' (19). Following from this point, Priestley asserts that the text requires each person to take part in revolution on a personal level: 'the good citizen [...] will discover more patriotic zeal, in reforming what is amiss in his own moral and religious conduct and that of his family; than in listening to the vain rant of enthusiasts, or enlisting under the banner of modern reformers' (viii).

<sup>37</sup> This was the version that was read and annotated by Percy Shelley (Wroe 36).

<sup>38</sup> The important connection between emotion and religion has long been an issue under discussion in Christian theology. John Corrigan has summarised the various shifts relating to the perception of this relationship, drawing special attention to the influence of Augustine of Hippo (354–430 c.e.) (whose views on the subject were particularly powerful in shaping Christian thought), as well as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Rene Descartes and Benedict Spinoza. He reminds us of the perennial questions surrounding emotion, and how differently each period deals with them. Of particular interest is the soul's relationship to emotion; also free will in emotional expression, and to the emotions' level of importance in accessing God. As John Corrigan says, the field of religion and literature is based on the assumption that: 'emotional life is profoundly shaped by religion, and that religion, in turn, directs and reinforces the construction of emotional ideologies having to do with a wide array of behaviors [sic] (Corrigan 11).

## Notes to Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> This was included in *An Essay on the Origin of Evil, Volume 1* By William King and Edmund Law.

<sup>2</sup> Gay had stated directly: 'I deny that this Moral Sense, or these *Publick Affections*, are innate or planted in us. They are acquired from our own *Observations* or the *Imitation* of others' (Gay qtd King xlii). He continued about this: 'as some Men have imagined *Innate Ideas*, because forgetting how they came by them; so others have set up almost as many distinct *Instincts* as there are acquired principles of acting' (Gay qtd King xxxviii). Gay first established a definition of virtue, as 'the conformity to a rule of life, directing the actions of all rational creatures with respect to each other's happiness, to which conformity every one in all cases is obliged: and every one that does so conform, is or ought to be approved of, esteemed and loved for so doing' (Gay qtd King xxix). He considered that this involved obligation, most importantly, to the will of God, which itself was mankind's happiness (since he is infinitely happy and good) (King xxxi).

<sup>3</sup> He says this explicitly: 'From inquiring into the power of association I was led to examine both its consequences, in respect of morality and religion, and its physical cause' (I:iii).

<sup>4</sup> *Of Liberty and Necessity* by James A Harris (2005) and *Brain, Mind and Medicine, Essays in Eighteenth Century Neuroscience* edited by Harry Whitaker et al (2007) discuss Hartley in terms of his theories of vibrations and association, offering particularly helpful analysis of the philosopher's arguments. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* describes Hartley as an 'English physician and philosopher [...] best remembered for being the founder of associationist psychology' (123).

5. Stored in the medullary portion of the nerves and muscles, and allocated at birth, this substance allows the creature to live. These claims were also made by Cullen (Vickers 45). Vickers summarises, 'external exciting powers' or stimuli are: air, heat, food, wine, poisons, contagions, and secreted fluids. While 'internal exciting powers' are: bodily functions, muscular activity, thinking, emotion, and passions. When these are removed, death ensues. In the Brunonian model, vitality is dependent on the availability of sufficient exciting powers to stimulate us into life (Vickers 45). Coleridge was wary of the materialism of this doctrine, but appreciated it as the only biological counterpart to Kant's 'a priori' concepts of understanding, as the German Brunonians framed it (Vickers 54-55). For example, Roschlaub invoked Brown's theory of excitability as the biological counterpart to Kant's a priori concepts of the understanding (Vickers 59).

<sup>6</sup> The relationship between Coleridge and Dr Thomas Beddoes is described by Neil Vickers as 'the least examined of all the momentous friendships of his life' (37).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Brown was aware of Hartley writing: 'it was chiefly in the southern part of the island, that the hypothesis of Dr Hartley has met with followers; and his followers have generally been extravagant admirers of his philosophical genius, which, I own, seems to be to be [sic] very opposite to the genius of sound philosophy'. However he owned that 'That there is considerable acuteness, however, displayed in his work, and that it contains some successful analysis of complex feelings, I am far from denying' (Brown qtd *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* xx).

<sup>8</sup> See [www.oxfordreference.com](http://www.oxfordreference.com) searching for 'David Hartley'. Last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Etymologically, affections are 'The action or result of affecting the mind in some way; a mental state brought about by any influence; an emotion, feeling'. In Samuel Johnson's dictionary (1755), 'Affections' included goodwill, love, or kindness towards other people (Dixon *Passions to Emotion* 62). 'Passion' differs from the affections, being less inclusive in what it references. The word has greater physical connotations due to its association with the bodily suffering of Christ and the martyrs, and even when the term becomes secularized, the connection with the body remains; the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century definition is: 'A suffering or affliction of any kind', 'A painful disorder, ailment, or affliction of the body or a part of the body' (OED) Hartley's philosophy works more clearly with a later definition which relates passion to 'any strong, controlling, or overpowering emotion, as desire, hate, fear, etc.; an intense feeling or impulse';<sup>9</sup> Johnson's dictionary defines passion as the more violent commotions of the mind, but also again to 'the last suffering of the redeemer of the world' (Dixon, *From Passions to Emotion* 3). These varied definitions point towards the fluid definitions of affections and passions. The resonances between the eighteenth-century terms 'affection' and 'passion', with the more recent language to describe similar conceptions, 'feeling' and 'emotion', draw attention to this mind-body relationship, and the mind and body's potential unification and reciprocity 'Feeling' is defined as that 'Pleasurable or painful consciousness, emotional appreciation or sense (of one's own condition or some external fact)' ('feeling' vbl, n. 6.OED); and most recently, 'A talent or aptitude; an (intuitive) understanding or awareness. Chiefly in to get (also have, etc.) a feel for' ('feel', n. Draft additions November 2002). The specific elevation of the mental faculties here, relates directly to the esteem (and the sense of mystery) surrounding the powers of the mind-based 'affections'. Similarly, the interchangeable nature of the terms 'passion' and 'emotion' in the eighteenth century, relates to emotion's ongoing affiliation to the body. By definition, emotion is a 'moving out' and a 'transference'; this older definition gestures to the physical and expressive elements present understanding of emotion maintains.

<sup>10</sup> In Samuel Johnson's dictionary, it was given only the brief definition of 'Disturbances of the mind; vehemence of passion, pleasing or painful' (Dixon, *From Passion to Emotion* 63). It was associated only with agitation of the body or mind, a mass of people, or the weather. In the 1850s the term emotion gradually replaced 'passions', 'affections' and 'sentiments' (Dixon, *From Passion to Emotion* 98).

<sup>11</sup> This passage continues to explain that suffering will prevent pleasure after some time: 'However, the Diseases and Sufferings, bodily and mental, which this Vice brings upon Men, do, after some time, often check the Exorbitancy of it, still in the way of Association. But impure Desires subsist, like vicious ones of other Kinds, long after the Pains outweigh the Pleasures' (I: 241).

<sup>12</sup> He writes that 'their fall with Adam, the covenant made with them after the deluge [...] seem to intimate that there is mercy in store for them also, more than we may expect, to be revealed in due time (II.430).

<sup>13</sup> The spirits were present in, but distinct from, the four fundamental kinds of fluid (or humours as Galen called them) in the body: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. The four humours were endowed with characteristics linking them to the four basic elements, and ‘cold’ substances were seen to slow down the body, while ‘hot’ substances, invigorate it. The spirits were immaterial but present in the humours which were material. Disease was therefore attributed to an imbalance of the humours.

<sup>14</sup> While the body can lead the person to happiness through its natural functioning (teaching the person by painful associations), the person must acknowledge and understand these associations, before they can make progress.

<sup>15</sup> ‘The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart’ (I Samuel 16.7).

<sup>16</sup> Although Hartley also maintains some trust in the traditionally Christian idea of Jesus as Saviour: ‘At least, one may affirm, that the condescension of Christ, in leaving the glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, and in shewing himself a perfect pattern of obedience to the will of God, both in doing and suffering, has a most peculiar tendency to rectify the present moral depravity of our natures, and to exalt us thereby to pure and spiritual happiness’ (II:167-168).

<sup>17</sup> Theories of language relativity suggest that the way people think, and the reality they perceive, is dependent on the language they speak. See Perlovsky’s work on the Sapir Whorf hypothesis.

<sup>18</sup> More generally, the power of self-narratives to shape identity has been noted by Rosfort and Stanghellini: ‘Being a person cannot be separated from having a narrative identity, an active construction of my own self for which I am responsible (*Between Moods* 253). These writers suggest how narratives are continually being reassessed and updated as the human being hopes to understand himself or herself: ‘[A] person’s self-experience and self-understanding is based on self-narratives- an ongoing process of establishing content formulations about who I am, who I was, and where I am going. Through self-narratives I seek to understand my actions and experiences as a semantically coherent pattern of chronologically ordered elements, and to grasp the way I relate myself to that understand and to the world’ (*Being a Person* 261-262). When reflecting on the power of self-narratives, we can see that the feelings we attribute to ourselves and our surroundings are particularly important, always connected to the new conceptions and vocabulary we use to describe them.

### Notes to Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> In her review of the reception of Wollstonecraft, Cora Kaplan suggests that the recent contributions of lesbian, gay, queer and feminist theory enabled Wollstonecraft Studies to profit from an increasing focus on gender and sexuality (*Reception and Legacies* 265-266). This was important work which she says has ‘encouraged writers to address the questions of affect, subjectivity, and politics through a deeper and less tendentious exploration of what G.J Barker-Benfield has termed the “culture of sensibility” of the late-eighteenth century’ (266). My work similarly benefits from this surge of interest in emotion and gender, and hopes to illuminate a specific cultural moment.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Elfenbein references the limiting nature of the past biographical approaches to Wollstonecraft’s work that has ‘largely masked her daring’ (229).

<sup>3</sup> Earlier texts are important, but are often more occupied with placing Wollstonecraft within the canon, and justifying her value. In 1994 Syndy McMillen Conger argued that Wollstonecraft ‘still wants vindicating’ (xi). The edition of essays edited by Maria J. Falco (1994) is another obvious example of criticism that aimed to highlight the writer’s rightful place amongst her male counterparts. However, even in 2001, Wendy Gunther-Canada’s *Rebel Writer* emphasised why Wollstonecraft is important as a political theorist, situating her amongst her contemporaries. Gary Kelly’s *Revolutionary Feminism* (1992) takes a strongly biographical approach and the numerous biographies on Wollstonecraft by Todd (2000), Gordon (2005) and Franklin (2004), reveal the

ongoing fascination for the writer's life as much as her work. However this chapter agrees with Gunther-Canada's point: 'Many feminist identify with Mary Wollstonecraft, so much so that they conflate her life story with their own. Yet we can only know Wollstonecraft through her writings, her enduring legacy of critical thought and experimental practice' (168). This chapter aims to illuminate the writer's work, rather than her life, and to penetrate the meaning that she wanted to impart.

<sup>4</sup> Particularly striking is Tauchert's compelling use of the terms Athenic and Matrilineal to differentiate between Wollstonecraft's modes of writing. Tauchert refers Wollstonecraft's writing as Athenic when it is written 'under the cultural conditions that render that embodiment valueless and invisible except as mute and castrated object' (13). For her, this would include the novel *Mary*, where the 'transgendering' of the writer also results in the appearance of dead female bodies within the text and traumatic episodes (13). By contrast, 'Women's writing that is not Athenic does not enact this disavowal, but recognises itself in the maternal body as productive and labouring' (79), this type of writing can be referred to as the Matrilineal, the conditions of which are 'the acknowledged female-embodiment of the writer and the address of the reader as 'female, feminine, or feminist [...] regardless of the gender of the reader' (112); this includes *Maria* and *Letters Written during a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, which provide a more positive and confident celebration of the female body and its difference from the male body.

<sup>5</sup> *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* is concerned with 'revealing the central part played by religion in Wollstonecraft's thought' (3), where the writer's revolutionary fervour originates from her belief in humans' 'God-given potential' (174); happiness exists in 'amorous communion with God' (112), an eroticism that comes from a 'fantasising mind' rather than body.

<sup>6</sup> Although gesturing to Wollstonecraft's inevitable connection to Hartley, the philosopher is not credited as important to this period, or associated with re-popularising Locke and Newton for a modern readership. Barker-Benfield also ignores the connection between Hartley and Dr Cheyne, although Hartley was Cheyne's doctor. He instead surmises that Hartley's understanding of the nerves originated from Cheyne, and he presumes that Locke and Newton were the more important figures. He writes: 'the nerve paradigm betokened by sensibility forced her to recognize she could not fully distinguish herself from "materialism". With other believers, other writers especially, Wollstonecraft held "subtle electric fluid," that is, Newton's ether, is "the essence of genius" operating Locke's sensational psychology (as it that this had been updated by Hartley), in genius producing "in the most eminent degree that happy energy of associating thoughts that surprise, delight, and instruct" (16). Hartley is not mentioned in relation to the nerve paradigm; although Samuel Richardson published Hartley's *Observations on Man* in 1749 (which the author mentions) (7) Richardson's sentimental fiction and his literary discussion of the nerves, is always attributed to Cheyne, (also the also the patient and friend of Hartley).

<sup>7</sup> As recorded in Godwin's diary. Godwin and Thomas Wedgwood also mention Hartley in their correspondence of 1797 since Wedgwood was reading *Observations*; Scott. A Nowka says that 'Hays's materialist ideas originated in her acquaintance with the British *philosophe* and father of Unitarianism, Joseph Priestley, and her reading of David Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1791). Their ideas shaped her understanding of the two other figures that strongly influenced her thinking, John Locke and Claude-Adrien Helvétius. I argue that in the *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* Hays uses materialism and necessitarianism, or the belief that all future events are necessarily determined, to scientifically "prove" the inevitability of her protagonist's feminist actions, thus exchanging agency for a different sort of feminist potential' (522). He continues: 'Tired of misogynist assumptions about women that were at best supported by anecdotal evidence and received wisdom, Hays looked to the works of Locke, Hartley, and Helvétius to demonstrate that there was no difference between men's and women's mental capacities because they were made of the same materials. But this reliance upon a material explanation of the mind had a further implication, necessitarianism, which Hays would exploit for her purposes. In the era before the acceptance of probabilistic thinking, mechanistic and mechanical explanations of physics and even the human mind were so rigorous that, theoretically at least, all causes could be traced back to the "first cause"-God' (524).

<sup>8</sup> Wedgwood wrote to Godwin of Hartley, and Godwin replied negatively about the philosopher in comparison to Hume (30<sup>th</sup> January 1797): 'Your remarks remind me less of Hartley than of Hume, whom I am disposed to regard as the much greater philosopher. The grand reservoir of Hume's metaphysics is his *Treatise of Human Nature* in three volumes, which, I am afraid he somewhat injured [sic], when he attempted to recase it in the second volume of his *Essays*. Most of your observations are to be found in the second volume of his *Treatise*.

(192). Thomas Wedgewood had written on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan: 'I have spent the last four days in reading and considering Vol. 1 of Hartley' (Wedgewood Papers, W/M 36).

<sup>9</sup> 'I do ask myself, every day, "why should I be miserable?" - & I answer - Because the strong, predominant, sentiment of my soul, close-twisted with all its cherish'd associations, has been rudely rent away - & the blood follows from the lacerated wound!' (MH Correspondence 425).

<sup>10</sup> The sage's feelings are more abstract, 'appropriate' and practical, rather than emerging from real lived-experience or hardship, especially where relationships are concerned. When the sage finds the only survivor, a child, trying to awaken her dead mother, 'he felt compassion', yet his response is action-based and unfeeling, where he wants: 'To detach her from the body' (108-109); his approach shows strategic understanding of the working of the body and emotion's nature, rather than empathy. This is encapsulated in the shocking manner in which he drugs the child: 'persuasion would not have been very easy. Sagestus had a quicker method to effect his purpose; he took out a box which contained soporific powder, and as soon as the fumes reached her brain, the powers of life were suspended. He carried her directly to his hut' (109). The narrator explains this through a comparison of his differing feelings for the herbs, compared to his response to the shipwreck: 'All that was human in his rejoiced at the sight of reviving life, and he viewed with pleasure the mounting sap rising to expand the herbs, which grew spontaneously in this wold - when, turning his eyes towards the sea, he found that death had been at work during his absence, and terrific marks of a furious storm spread horror around' (105). After surveying the scene, Sagestus' response is calm and detached: 'Resting his chin on an oaken club, the sage looked on every side, to see if he could discover any who yet breathed' (106). It is only after his initial repose, having realised that there are no survivors, that his bodily reaction reflects the misery of the sight, and the narrator says he is re-connected to humanity: 'The blood flew rapidly to his heart; it was flesh; he felt he was still a man, and the big tear paced down his iron cheeks, whose muscles had not for a long time been relaxed by such humane emotions. A moment he breathed quick, then heaved a sigh, and his wonted calm returned with an unaccustomed glow of tenderness' (107).

<sup>11</sup> The largest section in the first part of the story describes the shipwreck, where 'he walked leisurely among the dead, and narrowly observed their pallid features' (111) in order to make judgments about their character. Looking at the dead friend of the orphan's mother, he thinks 'there was a great harmony in every part, and the turn of the nostrils and lips evinced, that the soul must have had taste [...] Penetration and judgment were seated on the brows that overhung the eye. Fixed as it was, Sagestus quickly discerned the expression it must have had; dark and pensive, rather from slowness of comprehension than melancholy' (118-119). The sage is unnecessarily harsh and critical of the bodies he views and he examines them with a specifically male gaze. This is encapsulated in his assessment of the orphan's mother, to whom he is erotically attracted. Despite his partial desire, he has little pity for the 'anger' he sees on her countenance, or her experiences, only judging her for 'compassion that wanted activity' (124). Yet for him, 'her very weakness gave a charming timidity to her countenance' (124). She is 'the lily that had been so rudely snapped' and full of 'delicacy, so truly feminine, that an involuntary desire to cherish such a being, made the sage again feel the almost forgotten sensations of his nature' (122).

<sup>12</sup> The husband's mistake is in his inability to reflect on his own character, and so his inability to implement changes.

<sup>13</sup> In 1787, Wollstonecraft wrote about the novel to the Reverend Henry Dyson Gabell that it aimed 'to illustrate an opinion of mine, that a genius will educate itself' (*Letters* 162).

<sup>14</sup> The solitary nature of her religious experience encourages her to understand God in Hartleian, abstract terms: 'She began to consider the Great First Cause, formed just notions of his attributes, and, in particular, dwelt his wisdom and goodness' (5). As an adult, she appeals to reason rather than God for comfort: 'Oh! reason, thou boasted guide, why desert me, like the world, when I most need thy assistance [...] When overwhelmed by sorrow, I have met unkindness; I looked for some one to have pity on me; but found none! - The healing balm of sympathy is denied' (52). By the novel's end, it is concluded that religion cannot bring her any hope: she is left with 'a heart in which there was a void, that even benevolence and religion could not fill' (63).

<sup>15</sup> Mary reflects on this later in the novel: 'Before she enjoyed Ann's society, she imagined it would have made her completely happy: she was disappointed, and yet knew not what to complain of' (16).

<sup>16</sup> This also encourages the reader to read Mary through her mother, hence the first line: 'Mary, the heroine of this fiction, was the daughter of Edward, who married Eliza, a gentle fashionable girl' (1).

<sup>17</sup> The mother is affected by her daughter's benevolence, and asks: 'My child, I have not always treated you with kindness – God forgive me! Do you?' (15). Although full of despair after her marriage (14), Mary 'ran to support her mother, who expired the same night in her arms' (15).

<sup>18</sup> In particular, the narrator relates Ann's weaknesses to the specific experiences she has borne as a woman. The reader learns that she is a daughter of a widow whose family had been reduced to 'distress' because of an extravagant father. Ann experiences short-lived happiness and privilege when she is educated by a clergyman, has a benefactor, and enjoys the attentions of a suitor, a 'man of property', with whom she falls in love. However, following the sudden death of her benefactor, the girl must return to her mother. She never hears from her lover again, and the lost hope becomes the trauma from which she can never recover. She grows sad and 'fond of solitude' (7), to the point of developing an illness which is clearly linked to her impoverished circumstances and disappointments.

<sup>19</sup> Mary is depicted as separated from other women because of her deep feeling and her passion to learn. Her character surpasses the understanding of tradition middle-class women, illustrated well in the contrast of the three ladies visiting Portugal. The narrator explains that their 'minds were shackled with a set of notions concerning propriety, the fitness of things for the world's eye, trammels which always hamper weak people' (24). Unlike Mary, these ladies had 'very little cultivation' and 'Without having any seeds sown in their understanding, or the affections of the heart set to work' (24), they are weak in their opinions and identities. As such: 'What would the world say? was the first thing that was thought of' (24). By contrast, even as a child Mary checks her temper in order not to become like her father, and learns early the pleasures of doing good to others.

<sup>20</sup> Mary is one who 'had a metaphysical turn, which inclined her to reflect on every object that passed by her' (23). Ann notices with curiosity the books she chooses to read, reflecting that Mary, 'though she had a lively imagination, would frequently study authors whose works were addressed to the understanding. This liking taught her to arrange her thoughts, and argue with herself, even when under the influence of the most violent passions' (13). The reader can imagine from this comment that such books might be philosophical, such as Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, which advocates the practise of soliloquy. Shaftesbury had claimed in this text: 'It is the hardest thing in the world to be a good thinker without being a strong self-examiner and thorough-paced dialogist in this solitary way' (76), and authors, those 'professed masters of understanding to the age' (70), must 'know themselves [...] For without this understanding, the historian's judgement will be very defective, the politician's views very narrow and chimerical, the poet's brain, however stocked with fiction, will be but poorly furnished' (85); 'He who deals in characters must of necessity know his own, or he will know nothing' (85).

<sup>21</sup> It was helping the woman on the ship which 'roused her out of her late stupor' and 'again set the faculties of her soul in motion; made the understanding contend with the imagination, and the heart throbbed not so irregularly during the contention' (48).

<sup>22</sup> 'For Wollstonecraft, *eros* was the core of the religious experience' (108).

<sup>23</sup> Even after Ann's death, she thinks of her, talking to her soul with passion and devotion: 'Tell me, thou soul of her I love, tell me, ah! whither art thou fled?' Ann occupied her until they reached the ship' (43), and even later in turmoil, she speaks again to the "Shade of my loved Ann!" asking 'dost thou ever visit thy poor Mary?' (52)

<sup>24</sup> The special nature of this female-female relationship is an emotion that men cannot understand. Mary's husband says such love between women was 'drawn from motives of philanthropy and friendship; this was language he did not understand, expressive of occult qualities he never thought of, as they could not be seen or felt' (16). Yet even the middle-class British women Ann and Mary encounter are equally critical and disgusted. The older mother labels Mary a 'romantic creature' and states: 'She is a foolish creature, and this friend that she pays as much attention to as if she was a lady of quality, is a beggar' (25). The daughters agree: 'Well, how strange' (25) and ask Mary, 'have you not a husband?' (26). Such sentiments from these negative figures in the



story highlight Mary's emotions as mysterious, secret, and too enigmatic for those obedient to society's values to understand.

<sup>25</sup> 'Every individual has its own peculiar trials; and anguish, in one shape or other, visits every heart [...] Christianity can only afford just principles to govern the wayward feelings and impulses of the heart: every good disposition runs wild, if not transplanted into the soil; but how hard is it to keep the heart diligently, though convinced that the issues of life depend on it. It is very difficult to discipline the mind of a thinker' (55).

<sup>26</sup> I am using the 1791 edition of the text, which has some small changes and was printed along with Blake's designs. Using this text will help us capture the influence of Hartlean culture more accurately.

<sup>27</sup> Leading female figures included Hester Mulso Chaprone, Catharine Macaulay Graham, Sarah Trimmer, Hannah More and Anna Barbauld (N. Hilton 2).

<sup>28</sup> There was a Dublin edition in 1799; a French edition in 1799 (where Blake's plates were included), followed by German and Danish translations (Franklin 40).

<sup>29</sup> As a result of John Locke's notion of the child's mind as 'tabula rasa', and later Rousseau's concept of children as naturally uncorrupted, an ideology of equal opportunity was established, and by the end of the eighteenth century, pedagogy was taken seriously because of its societal ramifications. Andrew O'Malley explains: 'The conception of the infant mind as the site on which the aspirations of republican middle-class ideology could be realized explains in large part the dissenters' enormous focus on education' (5). He adds that Dissenters, who made up about seven per cent of the population, were not alone in their fascination for children and their education. The 'explosion of interest in childhood, and especially in how best to instruct, manage and improve children, was spread across the middle classes regardless of political religious affiliation, and attracted the attention of members of both the upper and lower classes as well' (O'Malley 6).

<sup>30</sup> The text states: 'I myself knew a man who had hardened his heart to such a degree, that he found pleasure in tormenting every creature whom he had any power over. I saw him let two guinea-pigs roll down sloping tiles, to see if the fall would kill them. And were they killed? cried Caroline. Certainly; and it is well they were, or he would have found some other mode of torment. When he became a father, he not only neglected to educate his children, and set them a good example, but he taught them to be cruel while he tormented them: the consequence was, that they neglected him when he was old and feeble; and he died in a ditch' (369).

<sup>31</sup> Mrs Mason says to the girls: 'You have already heard that God created the world, and every inhabitant of it. He is then called the Father of all creatures; and all are made to be happy, whom a good and wise God has created. He made those snails you despise, and caterpillars, and spiders; and when he made them, did not leave them to perish, but placed them where the food that is most proper to nourish them is easily found. They do not live long, but He who is their Father, as well as your's, directs them to deposit their eggs on the plants that are fit to support their young, when they are not able to get food for themselves. And when such a great and wise Being has taken care to provide every thing necessary for the meanest creature, would you dare to kill it, merely because it appears to you ugly?' (371).

<sup>32</sup> This strong interest in animal welfare is particularly related to Hartley's ethos that sought to identify each individual's level of Godlike benevolence and virtue (an idea Priestley also references in his introduction to *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind*).

<sup>33</sup> We might recall the comments of Wollstonecraft's own charge, the future Lady Mountcashel, who later wrote of her childhood: 'almost the only person of superior merit with whom I had been intimate in my early childhood was an enthusiastic female who was my governess from fourteen to fifteen years old, for whom I felt an unbounded admiration because her mind appeared more noble and understanding, more cultivated than any others I had known – from the time she left me my chief objects were to correct those faults she had pointed out and to cultivate my understanding as much as possible' (Mountcashel qtd in Franklin 26).

<sup>34</sup> She continues: 'we ought to have a precise idea of what we wish to attain by education, for the immortality of the soul is contradicted by the actions of many people who firmly profess the belief' (136).

<sup>35</sup> She writes about this: 'What would life be without that peace which the love of God, when built on humanity, alone can impart? Every earthly affection turns back, at intervals, to prey upon the heart that feeds it; and the purest effusions of benevolence, often rudely damped by man, must mount as a free-will offering to Him who gave them birth, whose bright image they faintly reflect' (*Rights of Woman* 200).

<sup>36</sup> According to Wollstonecraft: 'These fine intractable spirits appear to be the essence of genius, and beaming in its eagle eye, produce in the most eminent degree the happy energy of associating thoughts that surprise, delight, and instruct' (*Rights of Woman* 145).

<sup>37</sup> Wollstonecraft reminds readers that the mind continually waits to attach new ideas and information to previous knowledge: 'When the ideas, and matters of fact, are once taken in, they lie by for use, till some fortuitous circumstance makes the information dart into the mind with illustrative force, that has been received at very different periods of our lives. Like the lightning's flash are many recollections; one idea assimilating and explaining another, with astonishing rapidity' (*Rights of Woman* 144).

<sup>38</sup> She adds later: 'But females, who are made women of when they are mere children, and brought back to childhood when they ought to leave the go-cart for ever, have not sufficient strength of mind to efface the superinductions of art that have smothered nature' (*Rights of Woman* 145).

<sup>39</sup> She writes that 'an attention to a child as will slowly sharpen the senses, form the temper, regulate the passions as they begin to ferment, and set the understanding to work before the body arrives at maturity; so that the man may only have to proceed, not to begin, the important task of learning to think and reason' (*Rights of Woman* 30).

<sup>40</sup> To clarify the terms she uses, Athenic writing is that which is written 'under the cultural conditions that render that embodiment valueless and invisible except as mute and castrated object' (13). For Tauchert, this would include the novel *Mary*, where the 'transgendering' of the writer also results in the appearance of dead female bodies within the text and traumatic episodes (13). By contrast, 'Women's writing that is not Athenic does not enact this disavowal, but recognises itself in the maternal body as productive and labouring' (79). Tauchert argues that 'The conditions for Matrilineal writing, then, are the acknowledged female-embodiment of the writer and the address of the reader as 'female, feminine, or feminist [...] regardless of the gender of the reader'' (112). This includes *Maria* and *Letters*, more positive and confident celebration of the female body and its difference from the male body.

<sup>41</sup> The corporeality of Hartley's theory could have been easily overlooked by Wollstonecraft in her early writing, especially when Priestley's *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind* dominated expectations of the text.

<sup>42</sup> More famously, such a dream was shared by Coleridge during the same time and he had convinced Priestley and Thomas Cooper of his own scheme.

<sup>43</sup> At sixteen Jemima is raped (106), and when she falls pregnant, she is beaten and thrown from the house (108); she takes a potion to give herself an abortion (109) and is forced into prostitution to survive. It is only when she falls into service again that an older man makes her his housekeeper, and she gains an education through him and his friends. She works in the asylum after his death, having been accused of exploiting her previous employer for financial reward.

<sup>44</sup> 'She found however that she could think of nothing else; or, if she thought of her daughter, it was to wish that she had a father whom her mother could respect and love' (*Maria* 90).

<sup>45</sup> *Maria* portrays the author's frustration at the detrimental effects of a traditional (masculine) idea of 'rational' education, which undermines women's assurance in expressing their feelings. This elevation of emotion, above a conservative type of reasoning, is most apparent in Maria's relationship with the Eton-educated Darnford, who she upholds for his learning, liberalism, and compassion. Darnford is introduced as one who reads widely, where it is from encountering his annotations in her books, that Maria refuses to believe that he can be mad: 'No, no, he is certainly not! [...] the man who could write these observations was not disordered in his intellects' (87). Maria is impressed that Darnford's notes in Dryden's fables are written 'with force and taste' (85) and that he comments on the state of society and government, able to form 'a comparative view of the

politics of Europe and America' (86). However, the reader is encouraged to remain suspicious of the sincerity and depth of this man.

<sup>46</sup> Initially Maria is able to assume Jemima's difficult past based on her attitude; as such she perseveres with the woman to gain her affection. Jemima appears cold, detached and closed in her ability to empathise. Like Maria, the reader knows nothing about Jemima other than her menacing appearance: she enters Maria's room 'with a firm deliberate step, strongly marked features, and large black eyes, which she fixed steadily on Maria's, as if she designed to intimidate her' (77). Jemima is one whose face had, according to Maria, 'little of the divinity of virtue beam in it' (79). Yet through their brief exchange, Maria sees beyond this façade. When she questions Jemima's ability to understand the grief that can cause madness, Jemima's reaction reveals her past: 'The attendant shook her head; and a ghastly smile of desperate fortitude served as a forcible reply, and made Maria pause' (77). This recognition is re-affirmed later, on hearing Jemima's life story: 'Maria thought, and thought again, Jemima's humanity had rather been benumbed than killed, by the keen frost she had to brave at her entrance into life; an appeal then to her feelings on this tender point, surely would not be fruitless' (120).

<sup>47</sup> "'Come to me often,' said Maria, with a tone of persuasion, in consequence of a vague plan that she had hastily adopted [...]. 'And believe me mad until you are obliged to acknowledge the contrary' ' (78).

<sup>48</sup> The profound experience-sharing of women has a much different impact on the reader and listeners compared with the shallow story of Henry Darnford: 'In a few words, he informed her [Maria] that he had been a thoughtless, extravagant young man' (94). He was sent to Eton (94), where he committed 'vices' which he says 'can scarcely be comprehended by female delicacy' (94) and enjoys women whom he finds at theatres, and whose 'vulgarity' he says 'I was not easily disgusted by' (94-95). When he moves to America to make money, again he comments on the women, whom he describes as 'far inferior to our European charmers' (96) so that 'I found that I could only keep myself awake in the company by making downright love to them' (96). He becomes idle and bored and so travels again, until deciding to return to England. He then recalls that 'I ran from street to street, theatre to theatre, and the women of the town [...] appeared to me like angels' (97). Darnford concludes his comment appraising Maria: 'I [...] wished myself again on the Atlantic, till I had a glimpse of you' (98). The sexual nature of Darnford's account is important, since it reflects the inescapable sexuality that appears in male-female relationships, and the narrator is clearly critical of how a woman's intellect and emotional sophistication can be lost in the case of romance. Maria excuses Darnford's vice: 'as he described his faults, they appeared to be the generous luxuriandy of a noble mind' (94). Her imagination 'conspired to soften her mind, and nourish romantic wishes' (98) and she stays alone after his story: 'weighing his words, recollecting his tones of voice, and feeling them reverberate on her heart' (98).

<sup>49</sup> This section of the letter directs us to the equally important points in both *Mary* and *Maria* that women's unusually strong emotional personalities render them objects of desire for intellectual men, who are attracted by their claims to self-understanding. We have seen Mary as an object of desire to Henry and a male family friend, and Maria as an object of desire to Darnford. In both cases, men disappoint their lovers, regardless of their good intentions, and lead them into emotional turmoil. As stated in her personal correspondence, as well as in her novels, Wollstonecraft identifies how sexual attraction leads to women's downfall and prevents them from achieving the autonomy they need.

## Notes for Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> According to Marc Kaplan, Fox's essay was 'widely acknowledged' (151). Shirley Dent argues that Anne Mellor is Blake's 'most trenchant critic' (121).

<sup>2</sup> Helen Bruder is the most important scholar for providing discussion of Blake and Wollstonecraft. Anne Mellor has also offered comparison of their ideas on slavery, and other critics discussing gender are aware of their intertextual connection.

<sup>3</sup> Blake's famous quip against Watson 'The Bishop never saw the Everlasting gospel any more than Tom Paine' (Blake qtd Bentley, 112), reveals his lack of interest in this man's approach to scripture; his positioning of Hartley firmly against his work implies how far apart the two were places in his imagination.

<sup>4</sup> Easson and Easson remind us that while the initial inspiration of the poem came prior to 1800 (from a vision where Los and Milton appeared to him), Blake was probably composing Milton between 1800 and 1803 at Felpham. The 1804 title page is more likely to have denoted the completion of composition. *Milton* was not printed before 1808/1809 (59).

<sup>5</sup> Foster Damon writes: 'This ballad was probably inspired by the attitude of Mary Wollstonecraft's friends, when they cast off that lady for practising her ideals of Free Love. Mary of the ballad is condemned for her frank interest in human passion, though she is not shunned until she rises "to be free"; and therefore no penitence is of any avail' (*Poetry and Symbols* 298).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Essick also believes *The Four Zoas* to offer 'striking parallels' with the content of her *Vindications of the Rights of Woman* (620)

<sup>7</sup> Hilton notes that 'This possibility is noted by Alicia Ostriker (130). The commonplace associations of *Visions* with Wollstonecraft begins with Foster Damon in Blake (100, 106), followed by Marry (109) and Schorer (289-93)' (69).

<sup>8</sup> Labbe makes compelling argument for Blake's representation of Marie Antoinette in *William Reading William Blake*.

<sup>9</sup> Anne Mellor claims that theoretically, Blake responds against the ideas Wollstonecraft depicts in *Rights of Woman* since Wollstonecraft advocated sexual modesty and based her argument for equality on the sexlessness of souls, rather than sexual liberation. She explains: 'instead, he translated the civil and legal slavery of British women referred to by Wollstonecraft into a specific *sexual* slavery' (365), and 'It is rather, as Oothoon makes clear, the psychological slavery of "subtil modesty" – that very modesty advocated by Wollstonecraft – from which Blake hoped to free both British women and British men' (366). Mellor's point is that Blake attacks the repression of female sexual desire, and sees its liberation and the promotion of free love as enabling women's rights more generally. However she is eager to disassociate Wollstonecraft with such thinking: 'Wollstonecraft had argued that free love of the kind here envisioned by Oothoon is a male fantasy that serves the interest only of the male libertine' (367). More important for our discussion, is Blake's engagement and sympathy with Wollstonecraft as a figure of oppressed womanhood.

<sup>10</sup> Helen Bruder agrees that Blake 'places the liberation of women's sexuality at the top of his own 'feminist' agenda' (57). Therefore, 'Oothoon's arguments are [...] an onslaught on the phallogocentric sexual ideology that was virulently current in the 1790s' although they also become 'expressions of, this pornographic culture' (57). Regardless, Bruder maintains that 'Blake attempts to find a place for the unfettered expression of women's desires at a historical moment when the controlling discourses of patriarchy were attempting, with much more effectiveness, to silence the voices of female eroticism' (57).

<sup>11</sup> Sutherland also attributes Blake's decreasing faith in sex to Blake's personal experience of women (with whom he had problems throughout his life) (424). He adds: 'Woman's love, in his experience, seems to have led not to increased love, not to visions of Eternity, but at best only to the limited joys of Beulah, and sooner or later, seemingly inevitably, to "torments of Love & Jealousy"' (429).

<sup>12</sup> Sutherland comments: 'Blake shifted his prophetic emphasis from the expression of hopes of revolutionary success and imminent social apocalypse to the expression of concern for the mutual forgiveness of sins and the winning of apocalyptic vision by individuals rather than by a whole society' (424).

<sup>13</sup> Hayes lists the numerous scholars who interpret Blake's work, especially relating to androgyny, as misogynistic. These include: Robert N. Essick, Webster, Diana Hume George, Margaret Storch, Anne Mellor, Alicia Ostriker and Jackie DiSalvo. Only Bruder and Margaret Walters see Blake as radical and offering a supportive idea of gender (157).

<sup>14</sup> Helen Bruder agrees that Blake ‘places the liberation of women’s sexuality at the top of his own ‘feminist’ agenda’ (57). Therefore, ‘Oothoos’s arguments are [...] an onslaught on the phallogocentric sexual ideology that was virulently current in the 1790s’ although they also become ‘expressions of, this pornographic culture’ (57). Regardless, Bruder maintains that ‘Blake attempts to find a place for the unfettered expression of women’s desires at a historical moment when the controlling discourses of patriarchy were attempting, with much more effectiveness, to silence the voices of female eroticism’ (57).

<sup>15</sup> Robert N. Essick agrees with this view that ‘Blake was deeply ambivalent about female sexuality. Attitudes that we now tend to label feminist or anti-feminist jostle together disconcertingly in his writings’ (617).

<sup>16</sup> Sarah Haggarty has a chapter dedicated to Blake’s concept of Salvation. She reads Milton as promoting Christ’s example and suggesting it is one that can be followed (178). Haggarty’s is a more traditional reading of the poem that recognizes Milton’s successful self-annihilation, and sees this figure as urging Ololon to the same state (179). Haggarty’s understanding of Blake’s idea of self-annihilation is aligned to Hartley’s. She writes that ‘self-annihilation, whilst in a sense an obligation, is also a choice, the product, in *Milton*, of persuasion: it is a voluntary decision, perpetually made, to extinguish one’s selfish will and so to accede to unrestrained love of God and others’ (142). See *Blake’s Gits: Poetry and the Politics of Exchange*.

<sup>17</sup> That such an image is subversive is obvious, where both writers present the irony of male figures still attempting to teach such women, instead of recognising their significance

<sup>18</sup> Hartley scholar Richard Allen summarises the state as occurring ‘when sympathy and theopathy [the feelings that arise from the contemplation of God] flow without restriction-when the person without restriction loves others and loves God’ (333).

<sup>19</sup> The use of the term is not recorded as being written about significantly in other writing between 1785 and 1800, contributing to the claim that Blake was influenced by Hartley more than any other figure. Earlier Madame Guyon’s text *A Short and Easy Method of Prayer* was republished in London in 1775 that did pose the idea and would have made it familiar to an interested readership.

<sup>20</sup> John H. Jones records the moments when self-annihilation is recorded. In *The Four Zoas*, this occurs when Los attempts to unite with his Spectre. In *Jerusalem*, the term is used with regard to Los’s building of Golgonooza and the awakening of Albion. In *The Ghost of Abel*, when Jehovah rejects Satan’s call for human sacrifice.

<sup>21</sup> Also noted by Jon Mee in *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, Religion* (284).

<sup>22</sup> He writes: ‘Blake attempts to undo the oppression of monologism by extending the dialogue of inspiration, and hence the creative process, to his readers. Blake asks his readers to annihilate their Selfhoods so that they give themselves the opportunity to create a response to his text’ (20).

<sup>23</sup> The ‘nervous’ language is used to describe Los, who has ‘fibrous strength’ (85), and Albion, who has a ‘fibrous left Foot’ (94), which are references to their nervous corporeality.

<sup>24</sup> The derogation of humans here emphasises Blake and Hartley’s abhorrence for the idea that any forms of creation will be spiritually degraded. As Hartley had said: ‘The *Jews* considered the *Gentiles* as dogs in comparison of themselves. And the brute creatures appear by the foregoing history of association’ (II:450).

<sup>25</sup> Johnson contended that: ‘In the scene of misery [...] which this mode of intellectual labour sets before our eyes, it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are most to be lamented. A language not understood can never be so read as to give pleasure’ (Johnson qtd Paley 795). There was also the matter of Milton’s will, first published in 1791, in which he tried to disinherit his daughters: ‘The portion due to me from Mr Powell, my former wife’s father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, having received no part of it; but my meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion and what I have besides done for them, they have been very undutiful to me. All the residue of my estate I leave to the disposal of Elizabeth, my loving wife’ (Milton qtd Paley 795).

<sup>26</sup> William Hayley actually attempted to repair Milton's reputation relating to his politics and his treatment of women with his own *Life of John Milton in Three Parts* in 1796 (Paley 791).

<sup>27</sup> Tristanne J. Connolly explains the connection between the human and spectre in Blake's imaginative mythology: 'That Blake's human is manifold in itself [...] is revealed by his depiction of emanations and spectres. Emanations and spectres split, painfully and gorily, from the human of whom they are constituent parts: psychic components separate and become independent personifications. [...] Emanations and spectres [...] can help, hinder, and even become, creative productions [...] Blake suggests that the multiple aspects of the human personality, which in the fallen world may work against each other, in eternity are reunified in the human form while retaining their individuality' (xiv)

<sup>28</sup> Blake enters into the Hartlean cultural discourse of necessitarianism and free will. Satan here is the more modern figure, immediately realising that even having a particular form can dictate his experience, and resenting being allocated his task in Eternity at the mills. He is born, therefore, 'Refusing Form in vain' (not wanting a body that might limit his experience of reality), and he begs his father Los for a different station. Satan seems heroic since, when Los attempts to nourish his pride and self-image, this does not satisfy Satan, who maintains his primary desire for the more difficult task. Satan enacts a belief that circumstances can be manipulated in order to impact on personal growth (and happiness). His heroic image is at its height in his own obsession with attempting to intervene and control the circumstances that create him: he attempts to attain his brother's harrow, and then he leaves Eternity and his family. Priestley and the Unitarians suggest that even if humans are the passive product of circumstances, active intervention should be initiated in order to control and change these and therefore 'produce progress, perfection, and paradise' (Kramnick 74). As a figure aware of the power of circumstances to affect his identity, Satan stands as the modern, post-Hartlean figure, against Milton, who is tied to an older, more fatalistic way of thinking.

<sup>29</sup> Peter A. Schock writes about the important cultural forces encouraging readers to view Satan in a sympathetic light: 'By the early 1790s, the sublime and humanized figure of Milton's epic antagonist, which had already gained heroic stature earlier in the eighteenth century, was further reshaped by Romantic writers into a vehicle of artistic and ideological freight, much of it iconoclastic or at best only marginally acceptable to polite readers' (2) Also: 'By the 1790s, the fallen angel had been reconstructed through a century of revisionist criticism and illustration. At the end of the eighteenth century, this figure is once again radically transformed [...] to the needs of a new era [...] by the new ideological and rhetorical contexts in which it operates [...] Thus the refashionings of Milton's fallen archangel are, arguably, more deeply informed by the cultural forces' (12).

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle argues for the tragic hero being 'the intermediate kind of personage, a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgement, of the number of those in the enjoyment of great reputation and prosperity; e.g. Oedipus, Thyestes, and the men of note of similar families. The perfect plot, accordingly, must have a single, and not (as some tell us) a double issue; the change in the hero's fortunes must be not from misery to happiness, but on the contrary from happiness to misery; and the cause of it must lie not in any depravity, but in some great error on his part; the man himself being either such as we have described, or better, not worse, than that' (*Poetics* 95).

<sup>31</sup> Freed explains: 'In *Milton*, Blake speculates that John Milton's representations of the "Female" and her relationship with her male partner may have been influenced by difficulties he must have experienced during his lifetime, in reconciling his own needs – artistic and intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical – with the demands and the conflicts of the women about him' (78).

<sup>32</sup> Storch agrees with the view that *Milton* cannot be seen as feminist because 'Milton's suffering is not so much his own oppression of his wives and daughters as puritanical patriarchy; it is rather that his individual personhood is threatened by the very existence of female as separate beings beyond his control' (134). Storch refers to the poem's 'horror of the split-off female Emanation' (135), and how the 'feminine force erodes male power' as seen in *The Shadowy Female* (136). Even where women are 'benevolent and nurturing', Storch argues that 'Loving female protectiveness is here inseparable from a condition of feeble masculine dependence' (138).

<sup>33</sup> 'In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins'

<sup>34</sup> The divine voice says, 'When I first married you, I gave you all my whole Soul. / I thought you would love my loves & joy in my delights [...] now thou art terrible / In jealousy' (116). As a way to remedy the situation the divine voice brings 'death & misery of those you love' (preventing the complete possession of anybody, and necessitating compassion); however, he also brings annihilation '& by Annihilation', the state of selflessness. The divine voice uses the example of Milton's journey to illustrate how annihilation will bring together the sexes again, also showing that this process of selflessness is two-way. It is only when Milton chooses self-annihilation that the wives should begin to start 'delighting in his delight / And then & then alone begins the happy Female joy' (116). The relationship between the sexes must be one based on mutual compromise, where each sex is willing to be unselfish on behalf of the other.

## Notes to Conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Gaull's concept of the ideas-based 'cultural revolution' and 'revolution of literacy' relates to the cultural moment I depicted that made Hartley's work newly pertinent to intellectual interests and concerns. She explains this was a time that 'produced readers who educated themselves, each other, their children with books they chose and purchased, whose needs shaped what was written and how it was sold, who created the market that Johnson and his circle served' (274)

<sup>2</sup> William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft identify this connection, noting her acquaintance with Priestley, and Barbauld's subsequent use of the theory of association (235). Considering her close affiliation with the Warrington Academy, work could be done to examine which edition of Hartley she read, and how her Unitarianism impacted on her interpretation.

<sup>3</sup> See note 7 in chapter three regarding the work of Scott A Nowka. In the recent Broadview edition of *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, the editor gives more credence to Helevetius' influence on the writer, so this could be investigated further.

<sup>4</sup> Hazlitt wrote 'Remarks on the Systems of Hartley and Helevetius' (published by J. Johnson in 1805) after visiting Wordsworth and Coleridge to discuss Hartley. Wordsworth's Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* also shows evidence of his engagement with Hartlean ideas.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Holmes records that: 'A book order to Hookham dated 29th July included a collection of *Medical Extracts*, Sir Humphrey Davy's *Elements of Chemical Philosophy*, Mary's Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Women* [sic] and David Hartley's study of 'mental association', an early psychological thesis, *Observations on Man*' (153). This is an interesting selection of texts to be ordered together, and we could investigate Shelley's own interests, learning and philosophy to gauge Hartley's impact on a younger generation.

<sup>6</sup> In particular, Robinson's *Lyrical Tales* (1800), Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (1798), especially the introductory Preface, and Opie's love poetry, provide excellent sources for future analysis. A comparative study could prove fruitful in clarifying how men and women's engagement with Hartley's ideas might be different.

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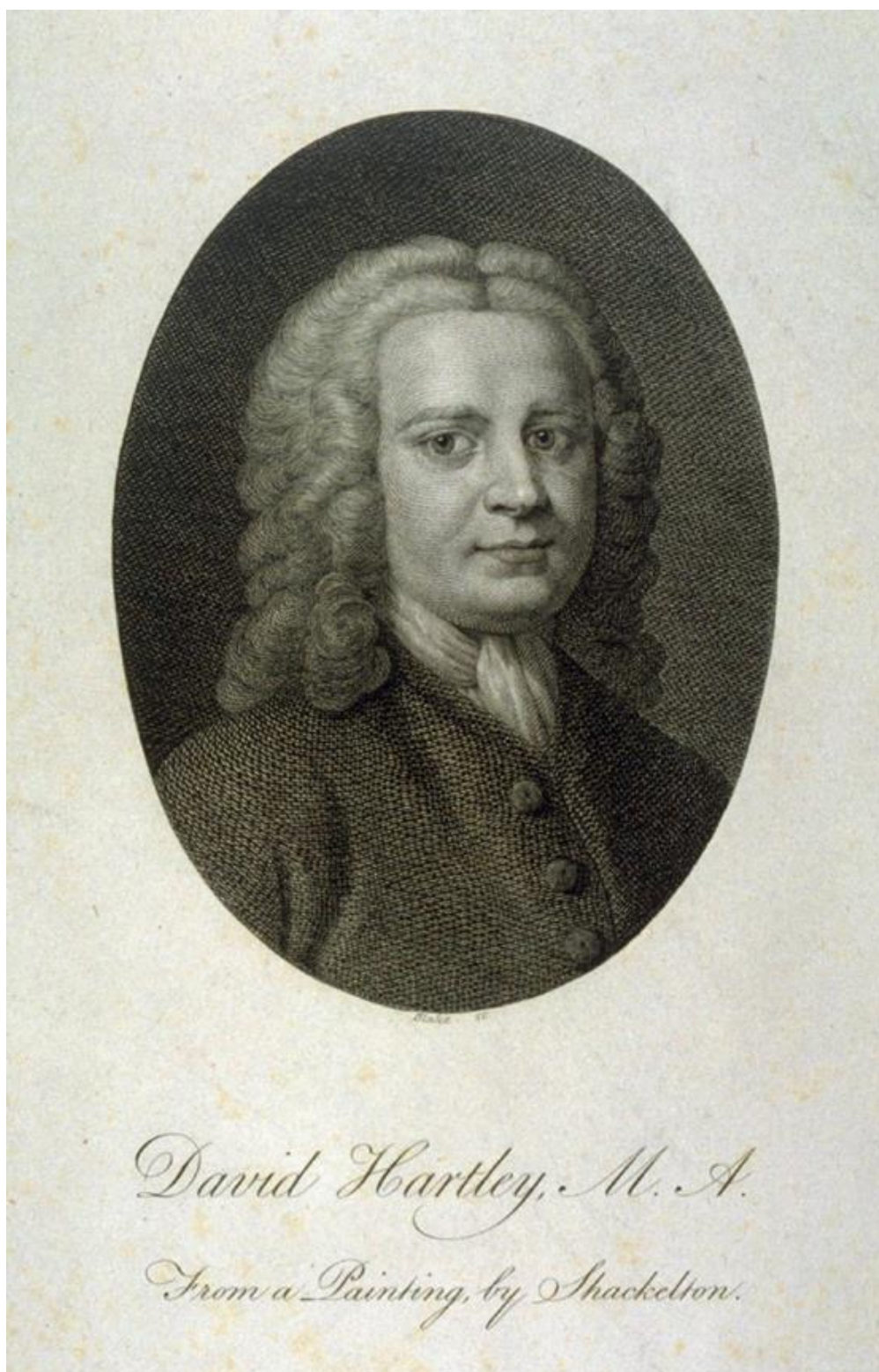
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## Appendix



David Hartley by William Blake, 1791



David Hartley by J Heath, 1810



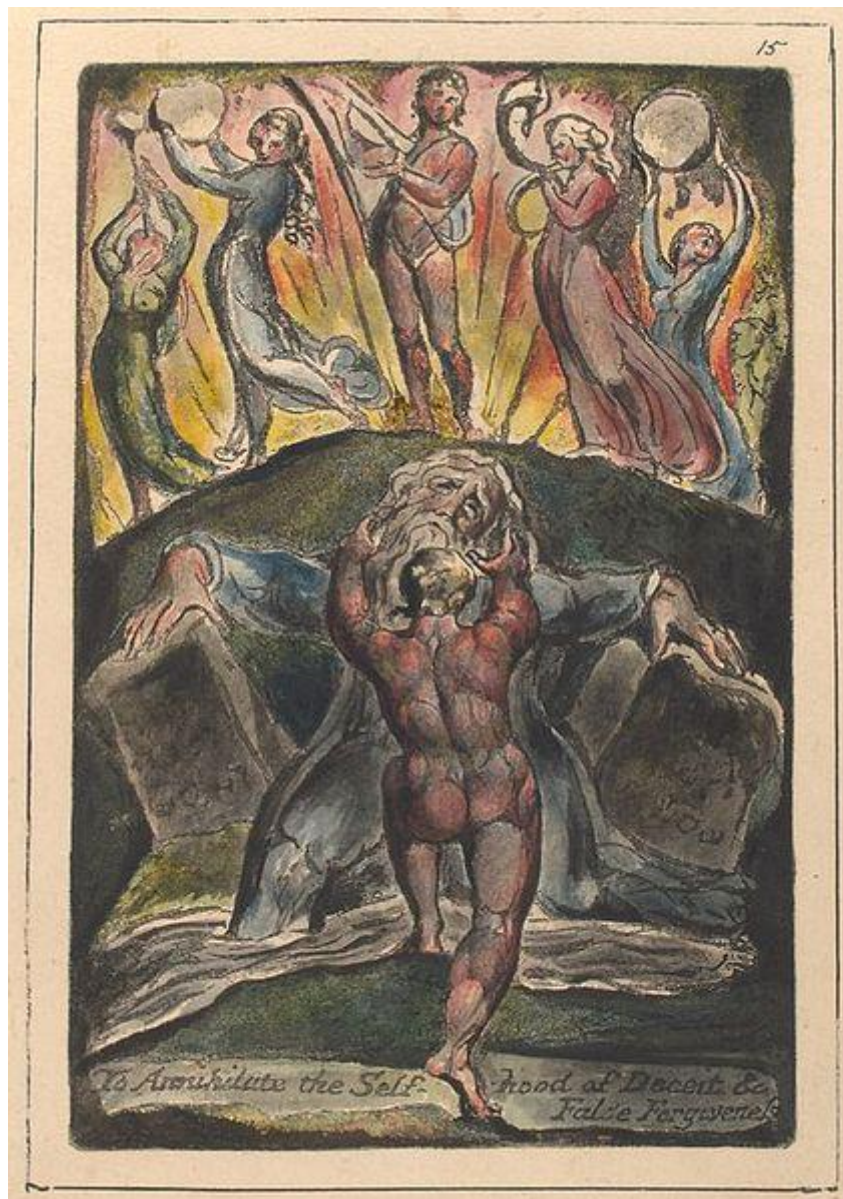
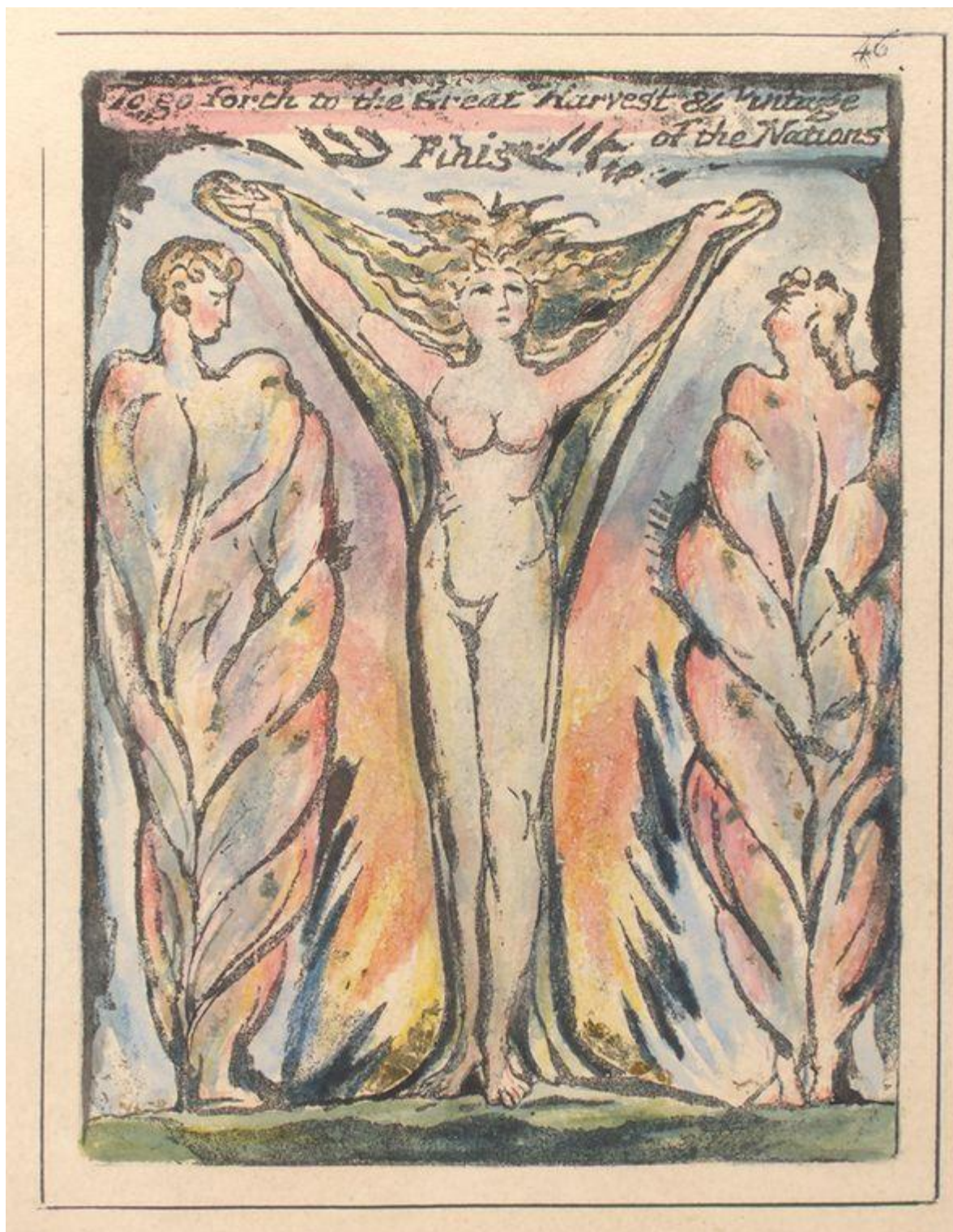


Plate 15 from Blake's *Milton*, depicting Milton and Albion



Final plate from Blake's *Milton*, depicting Ololon